



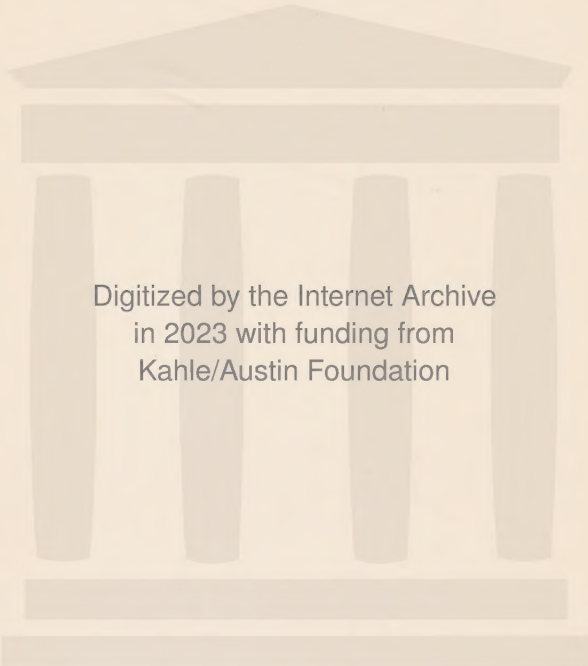
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SCANDINAVIAN CLASSICS
VOLUME XIX

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A BOOK OF
DANISH VERSE



ESTABLISHED BY
NIELS FOULSON

A BOOK OF DANISH VERSE

TRANSLATED IN THE ORIGINAL METERS BY

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A BOOK OF DANISH
VERSE

Adam Oehlenschläger, 1779-1850

THERE IS A CHARMING LAND

THERE is a charming land
Where grow the wide-armed beeches
By the salt eastern Strand.
Old Denmark, so we call
These rolling hills and valleys,
And this is Freia's Hall.

Here sat in days of yore
The warriors in armour,
Well rested from the war.
They scattered all their foes,
And now beneath great barrows
Their weary bones repose.

The land is lovely still,
With blue engirdling ocean
And verdant vale and hill.
Fair women, comely maids,
Strong men and lads are dwelling
In Denmark's island glades.

R. S. H.

THE GOLDEN HORNS

THEY pry in pages
Of ancient sages,
They search in the glooms
Of mounded tombs,
On swords and shields
In ruined fields,
On Runic stones
Among crumbled bones.

A fugitive glance
Of the past enchants
The inquisitive mind;
But the dark flows over
And shadows cover
The dusty screeds,
The heroic deeds,
Till the eyes are blind
And the thoughts go out
In a mist of doubt.
"You old, old
Ages of gold,
Flaming forth
Light from the North,
When heaven was on earth;
Out of the black
Where the years mingle,

Give us a single
Glimpse back."

Night hurries
In cloudy flurries;
Tumuli waken,
The rose is shaken,
A voice through the skies
Profoundly sighs.
Over the storms
The gods arise,
War-crimsoned forms,
Star-flashing eyes.

"O you who fumble blind
Shall find
A timeless trace
Of the vanished race.
A while you shall hold it,
Then darkness shall fold it.
The graven mark
Of the years that are dark
Is stamped on its sides,—
There your secret abides.
To honour us, lift
Devout hearts for the gift.
The fairest of mortals,
A maid,
Is destined to find it."
So they sing, and the shade

Surges over the throng;
Night captures their song
And closes the portals
Behind it.

Hrymfaxe the black
Snorts, and plunges
Into the tide.
Delling flings back
The bolts of dawn.
The gate swings wide.
Skinfaxe lunges
Up from the dark
On the heavenly arc.

And the birds are singing
In the pearled showers
Of dew on the flowers
Where the winds are swinging.
And the winds breathe her
Over the day,
The maid who dances
To the fields away.
Violets wreath her,
Cheeks aglow,
Hands like snow,
Light as a hind,
Gainly and gay,
Carefree mind,
Smile that humbles

The smiling land;
Sprightly wandering,
Love pondering,—
She stumbles.

She starts to behold
Flames of gold,
And lifts from under
The black mould
With her white hand
The red gold.

The zenith shakes
With thunder.
All the North wakes
In wonder.

Then come the crowds
In busy clouds,
Dig and measure
To find more treasure.
There is no more gold,
Their hopes are shaken,
They see only the mould
Whence it was taken.

A century passes.

Over the masses
Of shadowy peaks
The sluice of the storm
Tremendously breaks.

The turbulent swarm,
The warrior legion,
Across the Norwegian
Mountain, calls;
Over the wold
And the Danish plain
To the cloud-built halls
Where the radiant Old
Gather again.

“The few who know
The gift we bestow,
Who never surrender
To earthly bond;
Who scale the splendour
Of eternity,
And through Nature see
The light beyond,
Who trembling divine
God’s fires that shine
In flowers, in suns,
In west, in east,
In greatest, in least;
Whose thirst burns
For the Life of life;
Who—O Great Spirit
Of the vanished days!—
Who see thy rays
In radiance, rife

On the holy form
Of the ancient relic;—
Over the storm,
Through the gathered night,
Surely they hear
Again thy clear
‘Let there be Light!’
The son of Nature,
Unsought, obscure,
In whom endure
The heroic stature,
The honest face,
Of his father’s race;
Whose fruitful soil
Is rich with his toil,—
It shall be our pleasure
To honour him.
He shall find again
Our hidden treasure!”
The light is grey,
The forms grow dim,
Over rock and plain
They vanish away.

Hrymfaxe the black
Snorts, and plunges
Into the tide.
Delling flings back
The bolts of dawn.

The gate swings wide.
Skinfaxe lunges
Up from the dark
On the heavenly arc.

Where trees and bushes
Spread their shadow,
The plough pushes
Through the black meadow.

Abruptly the plough
Stops, and there rush
Shudders of wonder
Through every bough.
The clouds sunder,
Bird-notes cease,
All voices fall
In a holy hush.
Profound peace
Consecrates all.

Then clinks in the mould
The timeless gold.

Glimpses from the days of yore
Sparkle down the aisles of time;
Strangely they appear once more,
Riddles shining through the grime.

Aureoles of mystery hover
Over every secret mark;

Flames of deity discover
Beauty working through the dark.

Hallow them, for Fate's undaunted
Hand shall sweep away the trove.
Christ's blood fill them, like the wonted
Blood beneath the sacred grove.

Yet, you only see the graven
Gold, and not the light above it;
Common riches shown for craven
Eyes to estimate and covet.

The hour strikes; the gods have given;
Now the gods have taken back;
Storms crash; the clouds are riven;
The relics vanish in the black.

R. S. H.

HAKON JARL'S DEATH

THE nights are brooding long and black;
The Seven Stars glimmer pale.
Winds rush from the gates of the zodiac,
The pine tree snaps in the cold gale.
In the sacred grove the tempest rages
Among the moss-grown gods of the ages.
"Valhal is past;
We sink at last!"

It throws to the ground stained altar stones
And crushes the sacrificial bones.

The heap of Gothic masonry lowers
Brown in the moon's uncertain glance;
In dark blue air rise strutting towers,
And round the walls lean shadows dance.
A wisp of light spreads ghostly fingers
Through painted glass to the Cross, and lingers.
"They are sacrificed,
Thou white Christ!
Thy crown of thorns shall drive them forth
From the windswept mountains of the North."

Olaf Trygvason lands with his vassals.
They sing the mass on Norway's strand;
From gloomy southern castles
He brings his monks to the mountain land.
The Christian faith invades the region,
But Hakon leads his peasant legion
To fight and bleed
For the old creed.
They meet the King, but the ancient faith
Goes down in the sunset flame of death.

The cock crows loud through the midnight glade.
Earl Hakon slays his son,
Draws from his body the smoking blade,
And prays in the grove to the Pallid One.
"Christ, let the radiant gods still live!

My heart raves! what more can I give?
Go back again
To thy southern plain!"
But the owl flutters on the breast of the Norn;
It shrieks, and the mountain echoes mourn.

Christian banners seethe in the air;
They flash, they flash through the land.
The heartening horns of the Christians blare;
Luck moves with Olaf hand in hand.
The Saviour is carried before him proudly,
Psalms and litanies sound loudly;
With cross-shaped sword
He leads the horde.
Victorious rumours clear his path;
Hakon flies in lonely wrath.

He spurs his whinnying horse; at the river
Gaul it stops, spattered with foam.
"Let the Norwegian cowards shiver;
I never betray my ancient home."
Weeping, he kills his horse, and stains
His coat with the blood from the gushing veins.
"You will think it is I
That bleed and die,
But, Olaf, I still have men for war,
And on my side fight Tyr and Thor."

His eyes flash with a fierce despair.
He flies to the mountains' pine-roofed halls,

And hides in a shadowy cavern there
With Thormod Karker, one of his thralls.
A splinter of pine casts smoky light
Where the two sit silent in the night
Distrustful, both,
Of the spoken oath.

The thrall's eyes stare at the earl, aghast,
But midnight comes, and he sleeps at last.

Then a rustle runs through the cave's dark length.
Hermod appears to the scowling earl.

"The gods have put their faith in thy strength,—
Bane on Olaf, the Christian churl!
Fair Freia weeps, her gold tears fall.
Shall a southern crucified criminal
Be overlord?

Go, swing your sword!
Pour Olaf's blood in every shrine,
And a seat in Valhal shall be thine!"

The red shade wanes away in space.

Just then the thrall wakes with a scream:

"Jesus showed me, with smiling face,
Your body drenched in a bloody stream."

"What! craven slave! do you fear Thor's thunder?
You are grey as the sky when the sun goes under.

Dare you betray
Your master?" "Nay."

The thrall's heart cringes, terror-frosted,
The earl sinks down in sleep, exhausted.

He dreams, strangely smiling and sighing.
Karker gazes as though bewitched.
"Why did I see his body lying
In blood? and why is his right brow twitched?
He is, after all, a robber, a blot
On Norway's fame. I could! . . . why not?
When Olaf is told
He will give me gold."
He pauses, trembles, then Hakon's life
Spurts from the gullet under the knife.

Loudly the horns from the hills come pealing.
"Here he is! At last we have found him!"
Like a racing river rushing and reeling
Olaf bursts in with his vassals round him.
The thrall is felled with their battle-axes.
Olaf sees Hakon; his face relaxes
In smile to see
The dead enemy.
"Vengeance! the master heathen is slain,
And the veil of darkness rent in twain."

It rumbles across the horizoned heaven;
The ocean trembles, the sound goes forth
That the radiant gods of old are driven
Away, and will never return to the North.
Eternally, nothing but cloisters and churches;
Gone are the groves, but he that searches
May sometimes behold

In the lonely wold

An upright stone with a hero's mark

Still touched with the flames long quenched in dark.

R. S. H.

THE DRIVE

FROM stuffy, dark houses

Out over the wold

Where the ploughed furrow drowns

In a haze of gold—

See the man in the meadow,

Healthy and lithe,

As under the shadow

He sharpens his glittering scythe.

Look there where the flowers

Have woven a band

Round grey Gothic towers

Where white crosses stand,

And the spire's brown column

Looms grave and aloof—

See the stork that with solemn

Demeanour struts over the roof.

The ravine sloping steeply

To meet the blue seas

Is forested deeply

With green-shadowed trees.

And little brooks flashing
Across the green ground,
Bravely go dashing
Away toward the sky-coloured Sound.

Our cart slowly forces
Through sand, and we ride
So near that the horses
Are splashed by the tide.
A gull circles over
The waves with a scream,
Far out we discover
Hven Island in mist like a dream.

Once more the tall beeches,
The tangled ravine,
The long forest reaches,
The song in the green.
And now in the clearing
A flashing array
Of tents—we are nearing
The place of our laughter and play.

R. S. H.

MORNING WALK

To the holy beechwood, gently thou
Hast beckoned me;
O Earth! where never the heavy plough
Had furrowed thee.

The flowers that cling to the chequered shade,
As I passed them by
Smiled up from the hollows, unafraid,
Toward the open sky.

I crossed through a flat expanse of field
To reach the wood;
By three low hillocks, half-concealed,
A barrow stood.
Grey with the years' encrusted rime,
That oval ring
Recalled from the flat expanse of time
Its court and King.

O sparkling field, O virgin glade,
O grass-cool dale,
On you had Flora softly laid
Her bridal veil.
Cornflowers, red and blue, entwined
A diadem;
I had to stop, I had to find
A word for them.

Welcome again this happy year
In the sunny morn!
Gaily you twinkle and disappear
Among the corn.
Blue stars and red, you shine among
Gold lightning gleams,

And in your eyes, so clear, so young,
All summer dreams.

“Ah, Poet, thou dost not know, I fear,
Our sorrowful case;
Thou shouldst but see the master here
And his scowling face.
Each time he looks at us, he swears
We are a thorn
In the flesh, and Hell’s predestined tares
In the sacred corn.”

Ah, flowers, I too must share your fate!
A poet grows
Like a random cornflower in the great
Field’s ordered rows.
He stands in the way of the useful grain
In idleness,
Lifting his colours to sun and rain
For the Lord’s caress.

We belong to one another; we all
Are destitute.
Fair children, wreathe your carnival
Over my lute.
Tremble as in the wind, with clear
Music along
Each vibrant string, and God shall hear
Our morning song.

R. S. H.

SUMMER HOLIDAY

THE day is tranquil, quietly exalted,
High rises her abode, green flower-vaulted,
Light winged butterflies bend the new grasses,
Brook water, a blue rippled singing, passes.

Down from Olympus dances the newcomer,
Flora, veiled in the hazes of young summer;
Her blond hair flashes with the wind's veering,
Each heavy head of grain is her golden earring.

Before my eyes there breathes the grass-green
bodice
Circling the lily breasts of the slim goddess;
Then, as day wanes, the moonlight twines a slender
Belt on the water, gleaming in silver splendour.

Silence! swift Artemis runs over the meadow,
Glimmering through nets of half-transparent
shadow;
And now she shakes her torch, the pale flame
blanches
Through rifted clouds and overarching branches.

Hecate comes across the twilight, tending
Her plants, and here she lifts the backward bending
Night violets for their sweetness, there she closes
The purple cups of all her virgin roses.

Then slowly pacing toward me from the river,
The Mother of the Muses, memory-giver,
Grave Nimosene comes across the ages
And reads aloud from long-forgotten pages.

Where the black-mantled night sits brooding under
The nightingale's old mystery and wonder,
Her watch above two children she is keeping;
One is pretending sleep, the other sleeping.

The first will rise when scarlet dawn is shaken
Over the hills; the other will not waken,
For she is death. The first one waves her holy
Poppy wand, and sleep enfolds me slowly. . . .

Who rises yonder in the orient, laden
With swathes of colour? Ah, the rosiest maiden
Aurora! but she flies already, frightened;
A youth stands in her stead; the hills are
brightened.

He plucks the strings of his enchanted lyre.
Day flings the answer back in chords of fire,
And then from a thousand hidden tangles, ringing,
Flows the great morning hymn the birds are
singing.

Also in me, in me, Phoebus Apollo,
You waken songs of praise; mine too shall follow
The wind-path through the trees till they mount
and render
My homage in the zenith of your splendour.

Homage and thanks for the song we send to meet
you;

For the spark of fire we yield again to greet you:

Urged by your golden arrows we rise and enter

With you, the universe's radiant centre.

R. S. H.

THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST SYMBOLIZED IN NATURE

Christ's Birth

EACH year when vapours melt and wane,

Child Jesus Christ is born again;

The Angel in air, in grove, in sea,

It is the Saviour, it is He.

Wherefore all Nature, with serene

Rejoicing, buds in hopeful green.

Now the young stainless shepherd lads,

Watching the stars' high myriads,

See God's angels in fields of night

Assemble, trembling in cool moonlight.

"To-day a Saviour is born," they sing,

"From gentle Mary's womb, from spring.

"His only drink is the earliest dew,

His eyes gaze heavenward into the blue,

His hands reach heavenward; they are bound

With garlands of roses to the ground.
His cry is the breeze, in the straw he lies,
Blue heaven mirrored in his eyes.

"Ah shepherds, go to Bethlehem;
Seek the cold-hearted, counsel them
To go into the fields, and find
The laughing Child, green grass-entwined,
And hear his voice, and see his smile,
That heaven may lift the earth awhile."

The hovering angels reascend.
To Bethlehem the shepherds wend,
And tell their happy news, but they
Are scorned, and mocked, and turned away
Back to the meadows, where the sod
Blooms with the new-born Child of God.

The stars stretch forth their silver hands
And beckon the kings of the eastern lands;
The rays come singing with holy sound
And humbly sink to the living ground,
Praising the Lord made manifest,
Who smiles from the Mother's lovely breast.

They rise again from the darkened mould
In petals of purple, crimson, and gold,
Innocent children, devout and fair,
Half-lifted, half-bent to the earth in prayer,
Holding their yellow urns astir
With the sweetness of frankincense and myrrh.

Christ's Manhood

I know not where thou art.
Where hast thou gone, dear child,
Thou who from earth's young heart
Hast looked to Heaven and smiled?
Ah, in the scorched field
I search for thee in vain,
But in the woods concealed
I find thee once again.

So tall, so exquisite,
Thou wanderest alone,
In the glades dimly lit,
Far from the fiery zone
Where the pompous Pharisee
Dazzles the sun-cracked mould
With purple pageantry
And flashing sheen of gold.

Thou wanderest, O Young
And Beautiful, away
From splendour, deep among
The cool retreats of day.
I heard as in a dream
Through the green-shadowed hall
Voices of bird and stream,
And thy voice through them all.

The Holy Eucharist

Where hast thou gone, dear child,
Who looked to heaven and smiled,
From the gleaming
Earth, dreaming?

In woods and caverns thou art seen no more.
The air is harsh, the ground is dead and frore.

All her child-like flowers slain,
Nature will not smile again.
She is sick to death, and sear,
Pregnant with the fruitful year.
Yet, above the labouring root
Redden the ripe cheeks of fruit.
I will take thee, little one,
Nourished by the earth and sun,
Feed on thee in peace, and know
Nothing of thy mother's woe.

Wrinkled tree, like thee I stand
In the mighty orchard-land,
Wait as thou dost, to be fed
With the earth's unstinted bread.
Share thy strength with me, renew
My vanished sap and vigour too;
Humbly I would share thy meal,
Kneeling as the flowers kneel;
In thy leaves one mote of dust
Twinkling down the autumn gust.

Great thy power, O generous tree!

Courage, immortality,

Fill thee from thy groping root,

Fill me from thy basking fruit;

Circulation through one whole

Undivided perfect soul.

Mighty body, on thy flesh

I have fed, and live afresh;

Hallowed was that heavenly bread—

Why is all thy beauty dead?

Silence! Ah, the sweetness,

The colours that run through the vineyard with
radiant fleetness!

The gladness that flashes through Nature's
shadowed dwelling!

What is it that gleams and laughs where the grapes
are swelling?

Exquisite grape, wine-ruddied,

Dark nature revives in thy flame, and is flooded

With light from thy locks as the sunbeams caress
thee.

The shadow weaves

A face in the leaves,

And devoutly into the chalice I press thee.

And the angel who awoke the spring,

Whom sultry summer drove away

To the forest twilight-glimmering,

Is sparkling here in the purple spray.

The gentle flame, the river sound,
Light ether, spring's celestial friend,
The veil of flowers over the ground—
All fill this chalice at the end.

Lift the cup with reverent hands,
Stiff though they be with harvest frost,
Deep in the heart that understands
All blooms eternal, nothing lost.

Your withered creeds take root once more;
Your bread and wine are sacrificed;
Drink, heavenward gazing, and adore—
This is the blood of Jesus Christ.

R. S. H.

ALADDIN'S LULLABY TO HIS DEAD MOTHER

LULLABY, little Love,
Slumber sweetly, slumber deep,
Though your cradle will not move,
I shall lull you, Child, to sleep.

Do you hear the muffled storm
Sorrowing in brotherhood?
Do you hear the hungry worm
Ticking in the coffin wood?

Slumber, Child, as I sing.
Nought is lacking; take your ease.
Hark! your rattle's merry ring
From the spire between the trees!

Now the nightingale for us
Hovers nearer, great with song;
You have lulled me often thus,
Now I lull you, slumber long.

If your heart be not of flint,
Mother, see what I can do!
From this little elder splint
I shall make a flute for you.

I will play for your delight
With a soft, complaining tone,
Like a wandering voice at night
Through wet winter branches blown.

Ah, but I must leave you here,
For your arms are cold as snow,
And I have no cottage near,
Warm and bright, where I can go.

Lullaby, then, little Love,
Slumber sweetly, slumber deep,
Though your cradle will not move,
I shall lull you, Child, to sleep.

R. S. II.

SONG

BEHIND black woods the pale
Moonlight is sifting.
To God the nightingale
Her song is lifting.
The low tones float and linger,
Blend and expire,
And I hear the brook's white finger
Plucking her lyre.

In the wood there is one flower
Death has chosen;
(Soon, soon, perhaps, my hour!)
Its heart is frozen.
Let the last flower die.
From clods that smother
Its seeds, toward a fairer sky
Rises another.

O Darkness! perhaps soon
Here in the deathless
Path of thy summer moon,
I shall lie breathless.
Though the shadow of death is blue,
Smile, thou immortal!
And bear my last sigh through
Dawn's scarlet portal.

R. S. H.

There is a Charming Land (*Der er et yndigt Land*) was probably written in the summer of 1819. As a patriotic song it is even more popular than the warlike national anthem *King Christian*, which is well known to American and English readers through Longfellow's translation.

The Golden Horns (*Guldhornene*), written in the summer of 1802, was published in *Digte* by Adam Oehlenschläger, 1803. In the village of Gallehus, near Møgeltonder, South Jutland, were found two ancient golden horns, one in 1639 by a poor lace-girl, and the other in 1734 by a farmer. They were put on exhibition in the Kunstkammer (Chamber of Curiosities) at Copenhagen. The night between May 4th and 5th, 1802, the horns disappeared. Not until a year later was it discovered that a goldsmith had stolen them and melted them down for the sake of the metal. The wide discussion of this national and historical loss inspired Oehlenschläger's poem. The characters in the passage describing the sunrise are taken from the Northern mythology: "Allfather took Night, and Day her son, and gave to them two horses and chariots, and sent them up into the heavens, to ride around the earth every two half-days. Night rides before with his horse named Frosty-Mane (*Hrýmfaxe*), and every morning he bedews the earth with the foam from his bit. The horse that Day has, is called Sheen-Mane (*Skinfaxe*) and he illumines all the air and the earth with his mane." (*The Prose Edda* by Snorri Sturluson, tr. SCANDINAVIAN CLASSICS, vol. V, 1916). Delling (Dayspring) is the third husband of Night and father of Day.

Hakon Jarl's Death (*Hakon Jarls Død*) was published in the volume of 1803. Hakon the Mighty, Earl of Hladir, ruled Norway from 975 to 995. Olaf Trygvason, the descendant of Harald Fairhair, first king of Norway, spent his youth in exile. He was baptized in England. In Dublin, some time later, he heard rumors of the growing discontent in Norway. In 995 he set sail for Norway, constituted himself the champion against Hakon's tyranny, laid claim to the throne by his ancient right, and cherished the firm intention of supplanting the old Northern

paganism with Christianity. Oehlenschläger's poem treats of the last battle between the old order and the new, and the end of Hakon Jarl.

Valhal literally means "the Hall of the Slain." It was the abode of Odin's champions, but the word is often used, as here, in a wider sense as the dwelling of the gods.

The Norn was one of the Northern Fates. Hermod, Odin's son, frequently acted as a divine messenger.

The Drive (*De Kjørende*), from a little play *Midsummernight's Play* (*Sanct Hansaften-Spil*), describes a drive from Copenhagen to the amusement grove in the Dyrehave.

Morning Walk (*Morgenvandring*) is one of a cycle of poems called *The Trip to Langeland* (*Langelands-Rejsen*) in which the poet describes his voyage during the summer of 1804 to the island of Langeland between Sjælland and Funen. Stanzas 3, 4, and 8-10 are omitted.

Summer Holiday (*Freidigt Sommerliv*) is also from *The Trip to Langeland* cycle. Stanzas 4-9 and 15-18 are omitted.

The Life of Jesus Christ Symbolized in Nature (*Jesu Christi gientagne Liv i den aarlige Natur*), a cycle of poems on the theme that nature is a revelation of God, each season repeating events in the life of Christ, was published in the Poetical Writings, vol. I, of 1805. In the preface Oehlenschläger says that he has tried to show nature as an annually repeated myth of the divine Redeemer; this myth would have no possible meaning, did he not himself believe in the historical fact of the holy culmination. In the poem, therefore, it is necessary to have before one's eyes simultaneously Christ in time, in nature, and in the heart, as these aspects mingle with one another all through the work.

Aladdin's Lullaby (*Aladdins Vuggesang*) from *Aladdin*. The mad Aladdin sings a lullaby to his mother over her grave.

Song (*Sang*) from *Aladdin*.

Carsten Hauch, 1790-1872

THE WILD HUNT

WHEN they thought that Denmark's king
Soundly in the graveyard slumbered,
Words incredible, unnumbered,
Through the land crept whispering.
Rumor said: "The king hunts nightly
Stag and doe on Sjælland's isle
With a company unsightly
Through the country mile on mile."
They saw the Childe at the head of his hosts;
In the moonlight they heard the racket
Of his train of terrible shadows and ghosts
With the hawk and the sable brachet.

Fables deep in Time's abyss
From oblivion resurrected,
Champions in their rest ejected
From the dim necropolis,
Women from their hidden prison,
Heathen kings from the sepulchre,
All (the peasants said) had risen
Forth to ride with Valdemar.
Like wings the sound over woods was borne,
In terror the dwarf dug deeper,
While overhead a mad hunting-horn
Aroused the horrified sleeper.

Volmer's eyes with anguish blazed,
Never found he rest and quiet;
Ever in this awful riot
Must he hurry on half-crazed.
Nearest him, of all the shadows
Coursing over lake and glade
Through the night-mist of the meadows,
Was a pale and slender maid.
Her long hair flickered in the midnight blast,
She sighed with sighs inhuman;
On snow-white horse she galloped fast,
The fairest of all women.

Over castle and lofty house,
Falcon, raven, birds of evil,
Unknown fowl from Night primeval,
Fat, enormous flittermouse,
Over forests, fields, and ditches,
Clustering pallid flare on flare,
Wolves with hundred feet, and witches
Sailed the river of the air.
The hunters' shouts, the thunders' crash,
Roared high in the lust of slaughter,
Through horses' whinnies, the snap of the lash,
Above the livid water.

Just before them, roe and hart
Flew as if on hidden pinions
From the ghost-king and his minions,
Cleaving the slow mists apart.

At their head there flitted, leading,
Tall and white, a wounded hind
Stuck with many arrows, bleeding,
Shaking, in the midnight wind.

The peasants who saw the chase sweep by
Swore, to all who would hear it,
That out of the hunted hind's wild eye
There peered Queen Helvig's spirit.

As in an enchanted space,
Trees stood in the vapor rootless,
While the stag flew onward, footless
Yet unwearied by the chase.
Then the black snake coursed the meadow,
The red dragon rose unwombed,
While the storm wailed like a shadow
To eternal anguish doomed.

The full moon, like a bleeding troll,
Unheeding the earth's ire,
Cruelly charmed each tortured soul
From out the Abyss's fire.

Often when the autumn brought
Wheeling gusts of phosphorescence
In this dismal chase, the peasants
Whispered, pallid and distraught:
"Save us, Christ and Maid of Heaven,
From this evil by thy grace!
Save us from the infernal levin;
Save us: 'tis King Volmer's chase!"

They thought that his doom was sealed for aye,
By no prayers to be diminished:
To hunt until the last Judgment Day,
Till World and Time were finished.

S. F. D.

HOME

I REMEMBER a far place, where I would
gladly be;

There, hours glided slowly, silently,
As clear as silver pearls, strung on a golden wire,
And gentle as the words of first desire.

The birds played there all day among the maple
boughs;

I lived as they in one long mad carouse.
In my romping I would scour the meadows
everywhere,

And what the neighbors said, I did not care.

And from the window gazing at the high trees
above,

In later days I dreamed of him I love;
And when I heard his foot-steps hastening to me,
My heart rose in a silent ecstasy.

Beside the hedge of roses, we sat beneath the
moon,

And listened to the rivulet's rippled tune.

Our words, half in earnest, half in fun, flew to
and fro;

Which you may have forgotten long ago.

S. F. D.

CONSOLATION IN ADVERSITY

WHEN happiness turns from you,
And all seems unrepaid,
And you are scorned by enemies,
Even by friends betrayed;

Then think but little of it,
And be not self-deceived;
We are sent here for labor,
Though joy rests unachieved.

But there, where spirits gather
On the Milky Way's vast wave,
Where the white swans of the living
Soar out of Time and Grave,

You shall see revelation
On that irradiant coast:
He holds the greatest happiness
Who has endured the most,

For grief is but the wrong side
Of the flaming robe of bliss;
The eternal light is shadowed
In the dim springs of the Abyss.

S. F. D.

THE PLEIADES AT MIDNIGHT

WE ARE the nightly weavers
who gather the invisible threads
from the Milky Way's outmost ring
where the end of the loom stands.

Hovering apparitions,
unwearied,
wingless,
whose flight no bird
can ever equal.

For us, Time hardly has begun,
although the ephemeræ of worlds,
newly spawned,
streaming atoms in the immense ether,
dream of æons and eternities;
and think that the end is come,
though not yet have they completed
a single orbit
round the firmly linked Daughters of Atlas,
the bright-eyed

whose glance gleams through the veil,
and who carry the weight of innumerable worlds
unaware;
and who are like to swelling grapes
from which streams the wine of life.

What you call a thousand years
is hardly a cloven second
too short for the glance of our eyes
thereby
to reach the nearest among our daughters
circling in the ring of the Milky Way.

For us your longest sorrow
is barely one beat of an ephemera's wing
before quick death.

Yet we are also the children of Time,
and even the longest courses
in which shining worlds revolve
count as nothing
against the invisible circle of Eternity
which the hours never draw near;
and although we measure them
as millions of years,
they are only a stream
dried by a hot summer's day
compared to the unfathomable Ocean of Infinity
in the realm of the uplifted spirits
released from the weight of Time.

S. F. D.

The Wild Hunt (*Den vilde Jagt*) is from Hauch's ballad-cycle *Valdemar Atterdag, et romantisk Digt* (1861). The story of the loves of King Valdemar (or Volmer) and Tovë, ending only when the queen burned Tovë to death in a bath, is a very old one, first appearing in the medieval ballads. There the story is ascribed to Valdemar the Great (1157-1182) and his queen Sofie; but in the sixteenth century the historian Arild Hvitfeldt (*The Chronicle of Denmark*) ascribed it to Valdemar the Fourth (1340-1375) and his queen Helvig.

The legend of the Wild Hunt had a separate origin. This is found in Norway, Sweden, Germany, England, and northern France, with different versions for each province. In eastern Sjælland it was connected with King Volmer and linked to the Tovë-Valdemar legend: King Volmer being Valdemar the Fourth, whose famous dwelling place Gurre was there.

It is Hauch's own development of the story to have Valdemar and Tovë enjoy a postmortem revenge by hunting Queen Helvig, metamorphosed into a white hind. This romance has become a common theme of the Danish poets.

Home (*Hjem*), one of Laura's songs, from *Robert Fulton*, 1853.

The Pleiades at Midnight (*Pleiaderne ved Midnat*) appeared in 1861.

N. F. S. Grundtvig, 1783-1872

DENMARK'S CONSOLATION

FAR whiter mountains shine splendidly forth
than the hills of our native islands,
but we Danskers rejoice in the quiet North
for our lowlands and rolling highlands.
No towering peaks thundered over our birth:
it suits us best to remain on earth.

Far lovelier countrysides may be found,
as the foreigner truthfully teaches;
but the Dansker shall build his home by the Sound,
with forget-me-nots under the beeches.
Our children and sages together agree
on our blossoming field in the tremulous sea.

Far greater deeds on the battlefield
are performed by the foreign-born scion.
And yet not in vain bears the Dane on his shield,
with the Hearts, the proud Lion by Lion.
Let the Eagles contest the ball of the earth:
the Dansker stays true to the flag of his birth.

Far cleverer people are living elsewhere
than here, in our small fraternity;
but for household use we have brains to spare,
though our dreams do not reach eternity.

If the heart burns for truth and the right lifelong,
time will always show that we were not wrong.

Far nobler and subtler language may swing
the foreigner's spirit unhaltered;
the Dansker, however, can truthfully sing
about what is fair and exalted.

Though our mother-tongue may fall wrong by a
hair,
it appeals more than strangers perhaps are aware.

Far more of rare metals, the white and the red,
have strangers, before which they grovel.
But every Dane has his daily bread,
though he dwell in a palace or hovel.
And so of our riches we truly can vaunt,
when few have too much, with still fewer in want.

S. F. D.

THE HARROWING OF HELL

BY NIGHT there was knocking at Hell's lofty gate
Which roared with a terrible thunder.
The Herald was mighty, his message all-great;
The dead heard his words in awed wonder.

"To the vermin of Hell I bear tidings of bliss:
The Mightiest Warrior approaches.
In the dawn He leaps over the swallowing Abyss,
To quench these loud wails and reproaches!

"He walks on the coals as a girl on green plains,
He scotches the snakes of the rivers,
The Dragon He crushes, the Hell-wolf He chains,
While all the Abyss cracks and quivers!"

Then rose on their elbows the children of men,
Unchecked by their foul castigators,
Who howled in their turn through the blackness, as
when
Earth's mountains gush flames from their craters.

And rose on their elbows the dead in delight,
Thus never before had they hearkened;
They watched all the day and they watched
through the night,
While the fires in the dragons' throats darkened.

On the third day at dawn, when the Cock of Hell
crowed
For all ghosts to return to their dwelling,
The pure rays of Heaven shot through their
abode,
All dreams and all visions excelling.

Like a bright crowd of stars, in the white rush of
snows,
The angels pierced Hell's black pavilion.
And swift as a sun, from the depth He uprose
With cloud-shields of gold and vermillion

In Hell beamed the intolerable Light of God's
Grace,
Entangling the fiends in gold fringes,
While the walls bent and brake with the dance of
His rays,
And the doors of Hell burst from their hinges.

And all the dead sprang once again to their feet,
But only to kneel down astounded;
"Ah, welcome! Most Holy! thou Saviour most
sweet!"
From numberless spirits resounded.

Then: "Adam, where are you?" was heard in a
Voice
Like the lark on an Easterday morning;
At the call, all the sufferers began to rejoice,
And gathered, their torturers scorning.

Then Eve raised her voice, as she knelt by the
Lord,
And said: "Oh my Son and my Saviour,
I only am cause that we lie here abhorred,
All were damned through my wanton behaviour!

"The Serpent, now writhing and crumpling in fire,
Shone bright in the Tree of the Mystery.
He glided in gold and invoked my desire;
Together we turned the world's history.

“He whispered the words which seduced me so well:

‘As the gods, ye shall know good and evil’;
But pallid and blue we were hurried to Hell,
And were bound in the realm of the Devil.

“But if You are the Seed which was promised to me,

Conceived and born of a woman,
Then the Mother in vain shall not cling to your knee,
But be saved by the God who is Human.”

From her eyes two large tears like two suns
trickled down,

And—oh deed of ineffable merit!—
With shimmering hues in the form of a crown.
An arc hovered over Eve’s spirit!

The Light kissed His Mother; the spirits beneath
Cried out, for they saw the rays freshen;
And uprose as a Queen in her rainbow wreath
Fair Eve, who repented transgression.

And myriads and myriads of miles deeper down
Sank the fiends, while the fair Eve ascended.
They did not dare howl—bit their lips with a frown—
And quaked, till the earth was tormented.

Then the Conqueror soared to the heavenly fields
With the host of all those who adore Him;
Like the sun on the clouds, He was carried on
shields;
The carolling prophets upbore Him.

And triumphs replaced all the grief and the hate.
Only Death stayed alone in damnation.
The Cherub swung wide the sealed Paradise gate,
While the guards shouted loud adoration.

Thus splendidly rose on the third day our God,
Redeeming all grief and all evil;
And wherefore on earth it is subject for laud
That He harrowed the realm of the Devil.

S. F. D.

DAY SONG

WITH what rejoicing do we see
The sun has at last ascended
And shines on the ocean steadily
And makes the whole world splendid,
While we, his sons, cry jubilee
That night, long night, is ended.

Our God descended into birth
At the black midnight hour,
Then brightened through the east with mirth

Into dawn's scarlet flower.
So the Light rose, in which the earth
Glow's with eternal power.

If every leaf on every tree
Could shout with a tongue of fire,
They could not cry out worthily
The Grace of God's Desire,
Since Life now shines eternally
For all the world entire.

Now God be lauded for His might!
We sing like larks of heaven
Drenched in the dawn He raised from night,
In Life freed from death's fetter;
This blessed day of Jesus' Light
Makes all mankind the better.

Our feast-day strides across the land
Wreathed with the zenith's splendors.
Its hours at the Lord's command
Ripple like brooks in the meadows,
Till joyously at last they wind
Under the linden shadows.

The early morning is like gold
When day from death arises;
Yet evening, crimson-aureoled,
Has lovelier surprises,
Kissing the heart which once was cold
To dreams past all surmises.

Then we start for our father-land,
Where day is ever springing;
There is the castle proud and grand
With joy forever ringing;
There gladly through Eternity
With friends shall we feast, singing.

S. F. D.

Denmark's Consolation (*Danmarks Tröst*), written in 1820, was Grundtvig's first national song. The last two stanzas, as is usual, have been omitted.

The Harrowing of Hell (*I Kveld blev der banket paa Helvedes Port*) is hymn 243 of the *Sang-Værk til den danske Kirke*, 1837. In a note, Grundtvig indicates the influence of Caedmon's *Paraphrase of the Scriptures*, which is often transcribed word for word. There is also the strong influence of Scandinavian mythology. Christ appears as a Northern hero; Fenris the Hell-wolf, and the Hell-cock are mentioned.

In *Day Song*, the varying of rhyme with assonance is in accordance with the original.

B. S. Ingeman, 1789-1862

MORNING SONG

THE sun at dawning rises up
And bathes the clouds in gold,
Sails over sea and mountain-top,
Sails over hill and wold.

It rises from the shining shore
Where Paradise once lay,
To small and great it bears once more
The life and light of day.

It hails us with a glad salute
From Eden's morning glow,
Where stood the Tree of deathless fruit,
Whence life's fair fountains flow.

It hails us from the home of them
Who sought the wandering light,
The Star that over Bethlehem
Led wise men through the night.

And from the east a glorious host
Of rays, and on the seas,
A gleam from that celestial coast
Where grow life's apple trees.

The stars kneel slowly, one by one:
The great sun's diadem

To them yet seems the star that shone
On sleeping Bethlehem.

Thou Sun of suns from Bethlehem
Who gave men sacrifice,
Pour light from thy first home on them,
And from thy Paradise.

R. S. H.

EVENING SONG

THERE stands a castle in the west
Sheathed with shields of gold;
There seeks the sun his nightly rest
Within the bright stronghold.
No mortal hand has raised those high
Flame-towers richly gilded,
That portal stretched from earth to sky—
These God himself has builded.

A thousand pinnacles shine clear,
The amber gate swings wide,
Tall columns span the atmosphere,
Gleam mirrored in the tide.
The sun stands on the golden stairs
Mantled in purple fire,
The flag of light triumphant flares
From the tremendous spire.

Messengers of the sun will toss
Afair that banner of light,

Guiding life and the dawn across
The whispering sea of night.
Sun and life renew their powers
Behind Death's promontory,
And the sun comes back to the eastern towers
Of Paradise, in glory.

R. S. H.

EVENING SONG

THE sun in beauty left the hill.
Now rise the stars' bright legions,
Lamps of a world more glorious still,
Charting the darker regions.

Night is a vast cathedral hung
Between the arching spaces,
The world, a hidden leaf among
A forest's secret places.

The smallest leaf in deepest wood
Where creatures live securely;
Each fashioned in the mind of God.
Blessed and remembered surely.

That mind, that hand, where great and small
Are one, shall always cherish
The hidden soul whose leaf may fall
Away, but shall not perish.

R. S. H.

EVENING SONG

THE huge and silent Night now comes
With lights of scattered fire,
Each light a sun to countless homes
In vaster vales and higher.

Into the depths of heaven's sea
The night her wings immerses,
While chants the starry psaltery
From radiant universes.

O Night, speed forth thy worlds that sail
The everlasting river,
While holy stars and mortals hail
With praise the great Life-giver.

R. S. H.

HOLGER DANSKE'S ARMS

WHEREVER the battle started
In the many lands I knew,
I fought on, open-hearted,
For what I thought was true.

My helmet bore the eagle,
My armour the cross revealed,
Salient lions and regal
Hearts adorned my shield.

When my gauntlet challenged the foeman,
I raised my visor high,
And then he was sure that no man
But Holger the Dane was nigh.

If the wandering Dane seeks merit,
Yet hides his name and face,
That man is false of spirit,
That man will I not embrace.

R. S. H.

Holger Danske's Arms (Holger Danskes Merke) is from Ingemann's ballad-cycle on *Holger Danske* (1837). The legend of Holger Danske, or Ogier le Danois, goes back to French medieval poetry where the Northern knight is pictured as one of Charlemagne's champions. His story was popularized in Denmark through ballads, and especially through *The Chronicle of King Olger Danske (Kong Olger Danskes Krønike)* (1511, a paraphrase of Ogier le Danois by Chr. Petersen, one of the greatest Danish writers of the Reformation period. Holger Danske has become the Danish national hero. His legend is very similar to that of King Arthur, and includes the prophecy of a return or second coming. In *Holger Danske* Ingemann describes the ideal Danish character.

Poul M. Möller, 1794-1838

JOY OVER DENMARK

ROSES proudly glow in Dana's bowers;
Horses graze where sleep heroic dead;
Bees distill the sweetness from the flowers;
Starlings scatter notes in silver showers;
Children gather berries, ripe and red.

Here between the shadows of the shifting
Ocean never come the budding springs;
Only heavy whales go slowly drifting,
While the silent seagulls hover, lifting
Quarry from the waves, with moveless wings.

Friends afar in shining Danish summer,
Do you hail your comrade any more?
Here the tropic wind, a tireless drummer,
Beats against the sails, and this newcomer
Dreams of native fields by Dana's shore.

East or west, however far I wander,
I will think of you by Denmark's Sound;
Even where Constantia's vineyards squander
Splendid beauty, I imagine yonder
Bright Charlottë's beechwood, summer-crowned.

Monks in hovels of Manila grumble,
"Denmark is a little, beggar land."
Java's sons confirm it, even humble

Pedlars of Batavia scornfully mumble,
"Denmark is a little, beggar land."

Slaves of silk-clad Orientals hear them
Stir their fans in torrid discontent,
With their heartless, jeweled mates that fear them,
Gorgeous birds, but not a song to cheer them,
Gaudy tinsel flowers that have no scent.

Could you buy the faith of Northern maiden
With the promise of a golden boon?
Buy a gust of sea-waves fragrance-laden,
Clover fields for slumber, or a glade in
Denmark's fields to dream away the noon?

Poor men who have ploughed their Danish furrow
Shake the fruit from their own orchard trees:
Mind and body quick at work and thorough,
Corn and milk aplenty for to-morrow;
Heifers drowse in grass up to their knees.

Denmark's soil is rich, her sons laborious;
There are virtues in the Danish bread;
Wherefore Danish courage is so glorious,
Wherefore was the Northman's sword victorious,
Wherefore is the Danish cheek so red.

Let the Master of the East, reclining
With his purchased women, doze and nod,
Listen to the eunuchs' voices whining
Through the columns echoing and twining,
While he dozes, an exhausted god.

Underneath the beech, the Danish lover
To the loveliest repeats his vows.
Drifting moonlight showers white above her;
Mirrored swans on haunted waters hover;
Nightingales sing loudly in the boughs.

If such things be poverty's true measure,
Silk-clad eastern prince, I understand;
Then I break my Danish bread at leisure,
Thanking God, I too exclaim with pleasure,
"Denmark is a little, beggar land!" R. S. H.

THE OLD PEDANT

THROUGH the walled streets, past habitation,
 steeple,
Thief-like, here I have crept to play my own
Peculiar hide-and-seek among the people,
Yet always limping desperately alone.

There, see! How casually that youth advances
To watch the girl with rose-blood in her smile!
The courage of those half-reverted glances!
And I, disheartened, spy on them the while.

There is no use in spending so much money
For fashionable coats to make me gay;
They hang on me as tragically funny
As scarecrows set to keep the birds away.

These nankin trowsers that shone out so whitely
When they were bought a mere fortnight ago
Are ruined with my ink, are quite unsightly.
No marvel I am shy, when they look so !

My sleeves wear, where they rub upon the table,
My cuffs will crease, no matter what they cost ;
Writing the very best that one is able,
For credit won, is other credit lost.

Ah ! lovely girls, lingering through the garden,
I am no candle, smothered in its reek.
No, you are wrong : my heart shall never harden ;
It still is warm, only—I cannot speak.

My withered soul immediately grows tender
Watching your laughing wreath linked arm and
hand ;

And bashfully I worship your light splendor
From out this corner, where in shame I stand.

For in my depths I am forever finding
A fire, though hidden in death's livery,
As a book holds within its withered binding
Great pages of the rarest poetry.

So the one-legged soldier's adoration
Follows the laughing women at a ball.
He dances with them in imagination
Although his mangled flesh can hardly crawl.

Ah ! if my goddess, Pallas, would but scatter
Some dark cloud, that invisible I might roam !

—How long I linger here shall never matter;
Profecto, I eventually go home.

However, courage! Brave heart wins the beauty.
I dare to leave this corner, tempt the smile.
So, while my good stick does its daily duty,
I plod unheeded through the gay defile.

S. F. D.

THE MASTER AMONG THE RIOTERS

A BROWN, ponderous building
In the broadest square remains,
Whose spire of tarnished gilding
Soars above colored panes.
The gables its adorning
Has carved with pard and bear.
Impassive in a corner,
It braves the city's stare.

A row of chestnuts rarely
Their intricate green so weaves
That the spring breezes barely
Turn the five-fingered leaves;
And through this foliation
The sun-rays fall in bars,
Sprinkling the tessellation
With little silver stars.

Teaching and creating,
Here the Master dwells,
Steadfastly liberating
Dreams from their marble shells.
Clay gods on the shelving,
Stone gods on the floor;
But his deep vision delving
Sees countless visions more.

The chequered floor he paces
Nervously, to and fro,
To pause at his pupils' places
And watch their concepts grow.
Gladly he helps the clever,
Showing new, subtle ways;
But for the faint endeavor
He has no word of praise.

His strong right arm outstretching
Stripped from shoulder to wrist,
He sets them all to sketching;
Noting the muscles' twist
Like eels entwined and squirming
Caught in a fisher's mesh,
And livid sinews worming
Their way within the flesh.

From invisible creation,
Dreams crowd down to earth
And flood his imagination,
Demanding visible birth.

He snatches for his brushes
Before the dreams are fled;
See how his strong hair pushes
The sculptor's cap from his head!

But the very youngest pupil
Does not leave him in peace;
He jumps up, without scruple
Demanding his release:
"We can't remain here, sitting
Like helpless prisoners,
With mobs in the streets committing
Glorious massacres!

"Rebellion's splendid standard
Through the proud air lowers;
Tyrants, and all who pandered
To their unrighteous powers,
Flee before the storming
Of bludgeon and fowling-piece.
Hark! how the mobs swarming
Shout songs of our great release!

"To-day the masses are righting
The wrongs of our native land,
And those too young for fighting
Should watch them close at hand."
"Are you so curious, fellow?
Go to the window then,

And hear the drunken bellow
Of your ideal men!"

Thus speaks the angry Master;
But the tumult, louder swelling,
Threatens instant disaster
Within his quiet dwelling.
Among his gods and vases
The mob streams from the fray
With ghastly, blackened faces
And coats turned the wrong way.

They are covered with bloody bruises
And slashes, from sword and lance,
While flames like dangerous fuses
Flash from glance to glance.
Their spokesman steps to the Master
Feeling hot scorn arise;
The bitter hate leaps faster
Through the cold stones of his eyes.

"You girl! Have you no spirit?
Have you no decent shame
With such strength not to share it,
And win eternal fame?
In the Arts' entangling honey
You stagnate to the core.
Break these gods carved for money!
And be a man once more!

"These dolls make patrons languish
In transports of delight;
But it is the People's anguish
That supports the Sybarite.
Rise up, redeem your errors!
A blow!—and you are free!
One hungry day of terrors,
Then money plenteously!

"Forward! Shatter their power!
Honest rebel, enroll!
This is the crucial hour
In which to save your soul!"
The Master answers unyielding,
Keeping his heart-beats down:
"No man shall see me wielding
Arms in my native town.

"I scorn your crazed disorder
Because I am as free
With holy Law for warder
As any god could be.
In the Law's copper-castle
The artist's place is sure,
Though hireling and vassal
Blow rebellion's Luur.

"Should the Prince need my power,
I'd be the last to hide:

You'll find me in that hour
Fighting by your side.
My Prince will make you rue this
Mad insult to his throne;
And though he could not do this,
I can defend my own.

"Get out of here with your lances!
Quietly, too; or soon,
If you take any chances,
You'll sing another tune!"
The leader scowls, and quickly
Beckons them to begin.
The eager swords flash thickly;
The house roars with the din.

The marble dreams fall, shattered
In the first wave of war,
Their glimmering fragments scattered
Over the chequered floor.
Just once the leader beckoned;
And the work of a Master's life
Was crushed in a single second
Of incoherent strife!

"Fool! Pander who hastens
To fawn upon the great!
Now see how the People chastens
The poor emasculate!"
Mute, with a ghastly pallor,

He gazes at floor, at shelf,
Caught beyond thought of valor,
A broken statue himself.

Then, his whole body shaken
At the sight of his ruined home,
His eyes at last awaken;
His tense lips spit forth foam.
The crowd laughs at his action;
Yet it recoils back,
And the white teeth of the faction
Stand out against the black.

The Master's eyes revolving
Whirl like double wheels;
The whole world is dissolving,
His reason shudders, reels.
Gasping—nearly fainting—
He sees, like an iron rod,
A club used in the painting
Of some destroyed half-god.

He swings the club insanely
Three times through the air.
He springs! They crowd back vainly
In uncontrollable fear.
The mighty club descending
Crashes with blows of lead;
In turn, each stops contending
To nurse his broken head.

As when a maddened Malay
In Java runs amuck,
While men and women palely
Fall limp where they are struck,
So the infuriate Master
Upon the rabble springs;
His blows whirl fast and faster,
Like a windmill's wings.

With shouts and groans and hollos,
The whole mob runs away,
And livid Vengeance follows
To strike, like a bird of prey.
At once the house is quieter:
There lie before the door
One radical young rioter,
One paralyzed editor.

The youngest pupil gladly
Stays at the window-sill:
"How the whole city madly
Shouts with the lust to kill!
Freedom shall be victorious;
The plunder-laden boys
Rest with their spoils in the glorious
Roar of jubilant noise.

"They pass a drawer of raisins;
—They can reward themselves!—
And there the tradesman hastens

To mourn his empty shelves.
'What did you find in the gutter?'
That slut is asked by her rough.
'Here's baby-linen, butter,
Coffee, lemons, and snuff.'

"Already they pass the bottles;
I see wine froth and splash.
And there a patriot throttles
A tradesman for his cash.
But the Master!—how they fear him!
He rushes in a storm,
And everybody near him
Writhes like a trodden worm!"

Now, into the battle
Rides the Prince's Guard;
They close with the bellowing cattle;
The fight grows bitter and hard.
Here they force back the rebels,
There they are beaten down,
While all the tumult trebles
In the misguided town.

Insensate, the Master rushes
Down length on length of streets,
And horribly he crushes
What enemies he meets.
Blinded, with merciless laughter,
He clears a bloody path;

The whole crowd follows after,
But echoing his wrath.

Quiet . . . The moon from hiding
Soars through the clouds' foam
And shines on the soldiers riding
With music to their home.
They pass into the distance . . .
Still over the shimmering roofs
With delicate insistence
Echo their horses' hooves.

The Master, pallid, moody,
Sits on a road-side stone.
The strong right arm is bloody;
He prays with inner moan.
He is drained of all his powers,
The lids sink over his eyes,
And so he dreams for hours
With heavy, desperate sighs.

He is white from the disaster.
—Then the dream suddenly wanes.
For beside the sorrowing Master
The Prince draws his purple reins.
He asks him to rise from the boulder;
Praises are softly told;
And he drops on the Master's shoulder
A chain of woven gold.

"Of all who fought unswerving
In the day of our distress,
You are the one most deserving
This token of manliness;
For you unbidden proffered
An arm that would not yield;
To your native town you offered
Your own breast as a shield."

"My Prince, keep all this splendor,"
The pallid man replies:
"Never as a defender
Will I accept such prize.
I did not go displaying
My strength with this design;
To-day you saw me straying
In realms that were not mine.

"I am a faithful member
Of the sovereignty of Art.
I shudder to remember
This day—my bloody part.
The thought of it will darken
My other world's clear beams;
In peace I cannot hearken
To the music made by dreams.

"At home I live, a muser
Far from the city stir,

Not acting as accuser
 Nor executioner.
 But now in the dark will linger
 The memory of this brawl,
 And trace with awful finger
 Its writing on the wall."

S. F. D.

Joy over Denmark (*Glæde over Danmark*) was probably composed at Manila in July, 1820, during Paul Möller's trip to the east by way of the Cape of Good Hope—a trip which he made in the capacity of a ship's chaplain. Charlottes Bogelund, in stanza 4, refers to the beech grove in Charlottenlund, a small seaside place a few miles north of Copenhagen. The poet plays on the name Constantia; he means, of course, the town on the Cape, but Constantia is also the name of a well-known restaurant near Charlottenlund.

The Old Pedant (*Den gamle Pedant*). This poem was found in Paul Möller's notebook which he had in China, and was published posthumously with five others, under the title *Scenes from Rosenborg Park*. This is a public promenade in Copenhagen. The old pedant is a favorite figure in Paul Möller's works.

The Master among the Rioters (*Kunstneren mellem Oprørerne*), Paul Möller's last poem, was written in the autumn of 1837 as a protest against the growing political radicalism of France and Germany, signalized not only in their poetry, but in the July Revolution as well. In one of his reviews of 1836, Paul Möller wrote: "The period in the history of European poetry which one might name after Goethe, moves on towards its evening; and the poetry of the present time mostly belongs to one of two opposite categories: one, a dull echo of the vanishing Greco-German school; the other, the political night-school with its jarring watchman's cry which still seems to be far from the morning call."

Christian Winther, 1796–1876

A SUMMER NIGHT

ABOVE the beech's crown
A young star gazes down
Upon the darkening forest shadow-haunted.
Through copse and hazy vale
Strangely the nightingale
Sings her old threnody twilight-enchanted.

The lengthening shadows twist
And glide away in mist
Across the fens' disconsolate expanses.
The rose's petals part
And on her open heart
The lily breathes a dream of old romances.

Do you remember how
Under the blossoming bough
Where the lark sang, we wakened in the fire
Of the spring dawn, and saw
Each other, half in awe,
Half-gladdened with the glance of new desire?

Together here embowered
We two have grown and flowered,
And soon the storm will scatter us in ashes.
Yet, in the nights to be,

Our love's divinity
Will sunder darkness with eternal flashes.

Happy, without a word,
The rose-tree never stirred,
But folded up the secret in her spirit.
Only the silver sheaves
Of starlight on the leaves;—
Love knows her answer; love alone can hear it.

A trembling breath of air
Shook the trees' tangled hair,
Over the sky the flush of morning started.
The stars closed sleepy eyes
And vanished from the skies,
And night, the gentle friend of grief, departed.

O earth, let me confess
My love-inspired guess
To you, great Motherheart, my hope and anguish.
Let my lorn spirit creep
Into your breast, and sleep
Where sorrow sings and joy alone can languish.

R. S. H.

"FLY, BIRD, FLY"

FLY, bird, fly, over Furresøen's billows;
Twilight is gathering grey.
Palely the light in the waterside willows

Slants to the westward away.

Winds in the darkening forest are warning
Younglings and mate of the night;
Fly to them now, but come back in the morning,
Tell what you saw in your flight.

Fly, bird, fly, over Furresöen's surges,
Follow two lovers a while.
Fashion your song from their music that merges
Laughter and sorrow and guile.
Singer I am, and my song must recapture
All of Love's secret deceit;
Sing of the torment, interpret the rapture,
Conquest and bitter defeat.

Fly, bird, fly, over Furresöen's heaving.
Love has recalled you again.
Perch in the bush where the nightwind is weaving;
Sing her eternal refrain.
Ah, if I too could but swim in the ether,
Straight would I fly to my goal;
She is the star; in the forest beneath her
Darkness is flooding my soul.

Fly, bird, fly, over Furresöen's spaces
Vague in the thickening blue.
Far on the opposite margin she paces,
Love who is watching for you.
Slender and young as the corn in the meadow,
Hair like a flicker of light,

Black eyes as deep as the forest in shadow,—
O, you will know her at sight.

Fly, bird, fly, over Furesöen's dashing.
Darkness draws breath with a sigh.
Desolate trees are swaying and lashing
Turbulent boughs on the sky.
What of Love's song? could you listen and hear it
There with your flock on the wing?
Sing a goodnight to my tremulous spirit,—
Surely you know what to sing.

R. S. H.

THE NIGHT WAS KINDLY AND VAST

THE night was kindly and vast,
Quiet and shrouded;
Jewelled skies overcast,
Stars overclouded.
We were so greatly
Alone, while the stately
Branches over the window were swinging;
Everything softly singing.

We were so greatly alone,
We and our spirit.
Sorrow's story was done;
We could not hear it.
Memoried storms

And devouring worms
Lay slumbering deep in the caves of the mind;—
To all things but one, we were blind.

Out of life's scattered dreams,
Consummate fire.
Out of our separate dreams,
Single desire.
Tendrils that fashion
One vine of passion,
One joy, one hope, one vision, all making
One heaven for our love's awaking.

Dreamingly lulled to and fro
Like the tide turning
Over the sea with a low
Murmur of yearning,
Softly we greeted
The star that completed
Our union, so longed for, so richly begun;
Heart to heart, everlastingly one.

R. S. H.

OVER THE OCEAN'S BARREN MEADOW

OVER the ocean's barren meadow
Hovers a bird, restless and mute;
Has it not built in the rose's shadow?
Has it not pecked at the ripening fruit?

Ah, but a voice echoes persistent
With every beat of the little heart,—
O to be Home! to be home in the distant
Beloved coast, and never depart!

Frightened, the antelope runs through the dreary
Sand of the desert, on flying feet,
Never pausing, never weary,
Driven by thirst's unquenchable heat.
Now the fountains of life are gushing,
Now they have vanished, and blazing breath
Consumes his being, and drives him rushing
On and on to a desert death.

Do you see the stream from the mountain, pouring
Over the cliff with foam and flash?
Now it winds, and now goes roaring
Surely, agilely, down with a dash.
Where is the goal for its restless spirit?
Deep below us opens its grave
Where the river, the broad calm river, will bear it
Sighing out to the long seawave.

Withered colours, I drop my brushes.
Weak pictures, my pencil has snapped.
The strings are mute, my voice hushes.
Silence is all——

R. S. H.

Fly, Bird, Fly (*Flye Fugl, flye*). Furresøen is a lake a few miles north of Copenhagen.

Ludvig Bødtker, 1793-1874

HARVEST MEMORY

LET others in their rapture hail,
O May! the pleasures you disclose;
upon your tiny breast the rose,
upon your wrist the nightingale.
But I shall weave my wreath for you,
brown Harvest, in the sunset dew,
 when the steady, strong
 lilt of the long
scythes is blent with the thristle's song.

I drink your breezes clear and cold,
which as pale wine enliven me,
poured by a hand of faerie
into a goblet chased with gold.
Sweet my rest on the sheaves of grain;
above me, heaven's deepening stain,
 where a light cloud,
 whose small sails crowd,
steers its long voyage purple-prowed.

And when in loneliness I stroll,
a thought each minute drops free-given,
a falling-star slides down from heaven
and breathes its longing through my soul.
Then Venus charms my straying gaze

with the dim magic of her rays;
 and as I brood,
 across my mood
you glimmer, love, in the solitude.

And when in the late evening
the light is lost beyond the hill,
the wood-bird finishes his trill,
resting his flute beneath his wing,
then you are also laid aside,
my little lute, my friend well-tried;
 you rest concealed
 behind the shield
of a wing, till the spirit soars revealed.

S. F. D.

MEETING WITH BACCHUS

LIKE children in the cradle
Frascati's tender flowers
lay sucking the dewy showers;
I started on my way,
turning my donkey's bridle
towards far Mount Porzia.

Pleasantly to my hearing
the fountains leapt and rippled,
their sound in the ruins tripled
like the "Ssh!" of ancient days

when Cicero was clearing
his throat at an opening phrase.

The little sparrows crazily
flirted, joked, and scudded;
my rambling donkey studied
the brown road-sand beneath,
then tossed his wise head lazily
and grinned with his yellow teeth.

And if he paused in his roving,
my castanets (which often
in the long nights would soften
some hard mood with their cheer)
startled him into moving
when I shook them at his ear.

And thus, all hurry scorning,
now slower and now faster,
grinning, both beast and master,
we traveled at our ease,
and saw in the red of morning
Villa Dragoni's trees.

The flaming sunrays under
the boughs were softly sifted.
A hawk flew down and drifted
leisurely; though there slunk
a peering Roman hunter
behind a rugged trunk.

Upward we struggled cheerfully
while the heat blazed intenser ;
the honeysuckle's censer
grew sweeter as we neared
the cliffs where the goat climbed fearfully,
munching with his beard.

And while my donkey throated
his bray, I heard in climbing
the early mass-bell chiming
down from the town perched high,
as if the far sound floated
cloud-like in the sky.

It was a scene for a drama :
the vines, the golden mountain's
vale with its ruined fountains—
my eyes shut tranquilly
to let the panorama
sink in my memory.

I saw that town which dated
from Cato, the old Roman,
and felt a thirst uncommon ;
for the grape which Horace praised
was well anticipated
while such a sunrise blazed.

The donkey slowly loitered,
drowsy with my own dreaming ;

for both of us were deeming
the way long, the day young.
Wisely he reconnoitered
and stopped where the Bush was hung.

The heated haze pervaded
everything with its fullness;
yet what delicious coolness
in those arcaded boughs,
as though a wreath were braided
dewily on my brows!

A cistern deep and chilly
centered the drinking-room.
Glad at the welcome gloom,
I cried one "Evoë!"
and clear as a trumpet, shrilly
the depths re-echoed three.

Songs were roared in snatches
round Bacchus's old altar
by half-gods fit for the halter,
whose chatter blazed with life;
their coats hung loose in patches,
and loosely hung the knife.

A youth was stretched beside me
upon the bench day-dreaming.
His distant smile rose gleaming
so strangely from the heart

that his face seemed to guide me
down ancient paths of Art.

He wore exquisite sandals,
and lolled, for the day was torrid;
one hand upheld his forehead,
the other, with its glass,
lay nude between the candles,
a carving of Phidias.

My call arose, contending
against the Italian lungs.
"Wine!" was upon all tongues.
"Wine!" I yelled thirstily;
and from the deep grotto wending,
they bore the god to me.

I poured the cooling, scented
streams into the cup
and held the color up
against the glare outside;
then, utterly contented,
I felt the liquid glide.

And when my eyes descended,
the youth smiled unabashed;
no midnight ever flashed
so strong a starry play!
My eyes were caught and blended
in their delightful sway.

He watched, wholly enraptured,
my ecstasy in lingering.
Deliberately fingering
the flask, again I poured;
his words I barely captured:
“*Vi piace?*” I heard.

When in response I duly
praised the grape of the mountain
and poured its golden fountain
once more in a streak of flame,
his “*Non c’è male*” coolly
and indolently came.

I repeated: “*Non c’è male?!
Show me un migliore!*”
He smiled back: “*Si, signore!*”
“Than this?” was my reply.
“*Si,*” he returned, “*per Bacco!
Un meglio assai!*”

He rose immediately
and at the door he beckoned.
I followed; and in a second
the strong day sparkled round.
He glided delicately,
yet firmly, without a sound.

I felt no hot road burning
while watching his sandals’ motion
of which words give no notion,

and now and then his smile,
when, at his proud neck's turning,
I glimpsed his clear profile.

We stopped at his tiny dwelling,
a ruin of other ages,
whose lonely stones in stages
were raised ruddy and warm,
half lost within the swelling
folds of the ivy's arm.

He touched a rusty portal,
which opening, betrayed
stairs leading down through shade.
I passed from the day's light
and shuddered in the immortal
cold of the mountain night.

The way grew dull and duller;
I groped, needing assistance.
A lamp at a far distance
stood by the stairs' foot,
casting a vague rose-color
through the nocturnal soot.

I saw his shade already
gigantically reeling
about on walls and ceiling
in the cave's dusky air,
while I crept on, unsteady,
down the descending stair.

His quick hands fluttered whitely
to prove his hospitality
by pouring new vitality
into a row of lamps
whose many moons shone brightly
against the mountain damp.

Astonished I beheld them:
seven splendid casks of wine
carved over with the vine,
which woke again my drouth.
The grotto's arc encelled them
as in a giant's mouth.

They lay like fettered powers
immemorably enchanted
in those far ages haunted
by the dim wing of Night,
before our years and hours
were measured by the light.

A figure from some old story,
the nameless youth stood smiling,
and held with his grace beguiling
a goblet glimmering.

"Let us begin, *signore!*"
echoed a bell's clear ring.

I saw his hand's dim lustre
plunge with a vampire motion
into the hidden ocean

a syphon's gleaming shape,
which sucked from a former cluster
the blood of a single grape.

The half-perceptible eddy
of its rose-colored splendor
blushed as shyly tender
as the first passionate kiss.
Ah! the price was already
won for such wine as this!

Again his hand's dim lustre
plunged with the vampire motion
into a second ocean
the syphon's gleaming shape,
which sucked from another cluster
the blood of a bigger grape.

I felt the great bestowment
of lion's heart-blood sweeping.
There is no such crimson weeping
in the hot ruby's zones.
With the courage of that moment
I could have captured thrones!

Again the syphon's measure
plunged with the vampire motion
and sucked from the hidden ocean
a tiny bunch this time.
He laughed with secret pleasure
at the pouring, liquid chime.

I heard the bright wine ripple
like distant cymbals clinking.
I thought that I was drinking
deeply on Helicon;
only Olympian tipples
was fair comparison.

While I exulted, praising
God Bacchus high in heaven,
the next three of the seven
the laughing youth passed by;
and toward the last cask gazing,
he hastened merrily.

In rich apotheosis
leapt a cascade of fires
like rushing of leafy lyres;
and then its full perfume
of jasmine and red roses
spread through the grotto's gloom.

He poured it higher, quicker;
its hissing snow raced storming
into the goblet, forming
a foamy pyramid
which crowned the radiant liquor
Then—"Eccolo!" he said.

I drank. My eye was captured
by the bubbles' stream and ramp;

it was a mystical lamp,
a magical veil bepearled;
and so I stared enraptured
into another world.

It seemed in my fascination
that pillars rose in thunder
fitting their shoulders under
the huge curve of a dome,
while ivied decoration
festooned the ancient home.

A subtle mist came creeping;
casks vanished from their places.
Lo! yellow leopard faces
gleamed from the shadow dimly;
seven gold leopards sleeping,
their paws outstretching grimly.

Stupefied at the glamour,
I looked up. He was leaning
on a thyrsus. His smile's meaning
grew terrible, august;
and I could only stammer:
"Dionysius!" from the dust. . . .

I had fallen; there was riot;
but swooning from the welter,
I woke in the wood's shelter
beside a tiny spring.

About me there was quiet,
and it was evening.

His long ears drooping, by me
my donkey waited lonely.
(How, the god Bacchus only
can say!) His open eye
in slumber seemed to spy me
stupidly, drowsily.

It was futile and unpleasant,
a spiritual treason,
to listen to my Reason
making its baffled guess:
"He was some vineyard peasant;
it was but drunkenness."

"A drinking-bout with peasants,"
aloud I repeated after;
then sounded a low laughter
close by a tree's root.
Distinctly I glimpsed a presence,
the shape of a goatly foot.

I leapt from my fern-couch, fluttering
with indescribable panic;
my donkey felt the tyrannic
urge of my heels and goad,
while they pursued us, muttering
along the dusky road.

They did not cease their vexing
till we saw Frascati gleam;
then it melted into a dream,
a riddle, a fairy play.
Nothing proved more perplexing
in all Hesperia.

Later I made endeavor
to find him. I persisted
until what hope existed
wore itself out in vain;
he disappeared forever.
I never saw him again. S. F. D.

Emil Aarestrup, 1800-1856

THE SLEEPER

THE coaches rolled on the driveway
Before the white colonnade
Reflected in the water
With its flowered balustrade.

I timidly stood on the flagstones
Which long cloud-shadows swept,
By a pane beneath an awning
Where a caterpillar crept.

I gazed in through the window
To see what I could spy
Within the fragrant temple
Blue as a summer sky.

And there I saw you sleeping
In deep abandonment,
And round your dreaming head
Your ivory arms were bent.

And there I saw you sleeping
On cushions of old brocade,
And high round your dreaming head
Your dazzling arms were laid.

S. F. D.

A MORNING WALK

LATELY it had been raining
It was near eight o'clock.
With little, bright galoshes
You trod the gravel walk.

I followed your dear footsteps
Through the park's poplar wood.
And saw two black snails crawling
After, as fast as they could.

I found your small glove, keeping
The print of your hand's form,
Among the strawberry creepers.
Forgotten and still warm;

And where, among the acacias,
A god stands silently,
I saw you fling your elbow
Upon his marble knee;

—And hidden by cool shadows
Read the page with tears
Which your long distant lover
Had sent across the years;

—Press kisses on the paper;
—Almost embrace the stone.
I gazed at the chestnut branches,
And felt, as the sea, alone;

And thought: "Would I were hanging
Strangled, like that field-fare
Whose mangled body dangles
In the inescapable snare." S. F. D.

FEAR

HOLD tight, press closer to me
With your young, rounded arms;
Hold tighter, while your firm heart
Still pulses and still warms.

Too soon we fall asunder
Like berries of the hedges;
Soon disappear, like bubbles
At the brook's pebbly edges. S. F. D.

EARLY PARTING

IT was the early morning.
A soldier knelt sad-faced,
Binding a scarf of purple
Around the baron's waist,

And handed him his broad-sword,
His helm with its horse-hair plume,
Shining, as though but newly
It came from the armor-room,

And forward led his stallion,
A chestnut twelve hands high,
Who turned upon its master
A melancholy eye,

And in the gold-embroidered
Holsters, the soldier placed
With blackened hands the pistols,
Rebuckling straps in haste.

The baron mounted slowly,
His visage drawn and stern,
Then said with low voice: "Hendrik,
If I should not return,

"—Which very well may happen—
Saddle your horse, and take
These letters to deliver:
My honor is at stake."

Sparks rose beneath the stallion
Darting from whence he stood;
The black crows sprang up crying
In a curve across the wood. . . .

A distant shot re-echoed—
Another, only one—
While in the higher azure
Mounted the steady sun.

.

It wore on to the evening;
And the old castle hall
Flared from its slender windows
The brilliance of a ball.

To music the cupbearer
Throughout the golden shine
Bore in glittering crystal
The clear and purple wine.

A beautiful young maiden,
Fair as a bayadere,
Suddenly left in dancing
Her black-clad cavalier.

She heard, listening intently,
—Of all, she heard alone—
The hollow sound of hoof-beats
Clink on the courtyard stone.

Her breath came deep and quickly.
She shook throughout her soul,
Oblivious of the trumpet
And the kettledrums' loud roll.

She peered out of the window,
And in the dusk saw pass
Across the light from the castle
A helmet, a cuirass.

And she ran down the staircase,
The gold comb flew from her hair,

Also her wreath of flowers,
Leaving her head bare.

It was not the one she expected;
The sorrowing dragoon
Handed her a letter
Under the sinking moon.

She broke the letter open—
In dizzy shadows drowned—
And lay like a lovely statue
Stretched along the ground.

.

It is the early morning.
The sunrays slant through the air
And tinge the old lady
Asleep in her easy chair.

The peach trees and the almonds
Fill the garden with bloom;
But her skin is as faded
As an alabaster tomb.

Her epitaph is written
In wrinkles on her brow;
Her pallid hands are folded
In perfect quiet now.

The cockatoo in pity
Bends its yellow head,

Forgetting, as it watches,
To nibble at its bread.

On the high wall's red damask,
A portrait stretches itself;
An urn offers it flowers
Below from the mantel shelf.

And there he stands as living:
His blue eyes sad and chaste,
With the long scarf of purple
Bound round his slender waist;

With fresh lips, clustered love-locks,
A being of innocence,
Shining with youth and heaven
As when he vanished hence;

But with a hint of smiling,
Half wistful, half afraid:
"Love me; and yet remember
I am a dream, a shade." S. F. D.

RITOURNELLES

MORE beautiful than Leda, you lean on
The plane-tree rising by the tepid lake;
And now, dragged by your beauty, comes the swan.

. . .

The doddering deacon shall not be forgiven,
His endless sermon was abomination;
Yet sitting by your side, I was in heaven.

O button liberated!

If you are found, then you will be more useful
Than all the happiness I have created.

"Farewell," she said: "Farewell!" There was a
crying

In the sound of her words—a burst, a shudder,
Like the last gasp, before man stiffens, dying.

In the head's falling, the arms' sad depression.

In the slow quenching of the gaze of parting.

There was a tear-drenched funeral procession.

But in the ultimate kiss was a forecasting:

For in our fingers' long and silent pressure

We pledged the dedication everlasting.

And in our sorrow's mastery and retention,

Even in the dark tears of our resignation.

There was a Resurrection and Ascension.

As through these myrtles the cascade is leaping.

So through the dusky shadows of our passion

The long, unresting memory falls, weeping.

You fixed a pansy in my coat—just one.

The swallows darted black across the ground:

A thunder-cloud swelled up before the sun.

A double rainbow shone in that dark hour;
But your two arms seemed glimmering more
 brightly,
Holding an Alpine rose out in the shower.

Pause by the flowers in this lonely corner!
They might get angry with you; for all beauties
Are easily offended by the scorner.

To yonder grove of cypresses grey-hearted,
Come with me; and for a murdered passion,
While the bells toll, read prayers for the departed.

You must not think that I have grown the stranger
Because so cautiously I watch your features:
You know, the greater beauty, the more danger.

Your calm instruction long, long shall I treasure:
That passion always makes each pang the greater,
At the same time diminishing each pleasure.

A stream of words among the quiet flowers
Pearled from our lips madly, impetuously:
Can you remember the subject of those hours?

As the nightingale sings, where he is nested,
Not to betray his great desire and passion,
But in pretense that he is disinterested;

So we two most cunningly would smother
Our thoughts beneath the glib tongue's intonations,
Each of us hiding something from the other.

.

"My love is everlasting," murmured Clara,
Sprinkling her window-boxes in the morning.
The watering pot whispered: "I'm Niagara!"

S. F. D.

Hans Christian Andersen, 1805–1875

THE DYING CHILD

MOTHER, I must sleep, I am so tired;
Let me fall asleep upon your heart.
Don't cry so—Oh, mother, you must promise,
For your teardrops make my own cheek smart.
It is so cold; and outside it is storming,
But in my dreams the loveliest country lies,
Filled with crowds of little angel-children
Who play with me when I have shut my eyes.

Mother, do you see the angel waiting?
Is there singing on a distant chord?
Look, the angel's two wings shine so whitely,
Surely he received them from our Lord.
What is all the green and red and yellow?
They are flowers dropping from the sky.
Shall I have big wings like the good angel
Now; or must I wait until I die?

Oh, why do you squeeze my hand so tightly?
Why do you put your cheek to mine, and moan?
It is wet, and yet it burns like fire.
Mother, I shall always be your own.
Now you must not sob so any longer;
When you cry, I grow as sad can be.
I must close my eyes—I am so tired—
Mother—look!—the angel's kissing me.—S. F. D.
The Dying Child (Det døende Barn) 1828, was H. C. Andersen's first published poem.

Frederik Paludan-Müller, 1809–1876

TO THE STAR

To thee, thou spacious, star-encircled night
Whose rays blend softly like a flowing sea,
Thou citadel builded of golden light,
Crowning the forehead of eternity,
Untrod dominion far beyond our sight,
Where Hope, the pioneer, alone is free, —
To thee the rarest secret is revealed
That the soul garners in this shadowed field.

Almighty tongue! through starry choirs that sound
The praise of One by myriad worlds addressed
With floods of perfect harmony that bound
The hidden zone of Beauty's covered breast;
Light ever re-enkindled in profound
Voids of the dark, high Heaven made manifest,
Glass of the infinite where worlds are wrought
By the reflection of God's single thought!

Thou who art dark and light, concealed and clear,
Veiled night, with words of secret power inlaid
And borne in majesty from year to year,
O read that script to me, I am afraid!
Thou hast undone the creed that banished fear,
Thou hast crushed down Hope's timid growing
blade,

Read me the scroll that blazes on thine arc,
Life over death, flame sentinel of dark!

—Unending strength, work never once deterred,
And pleasure higher than world-pain is deep;
Mind of our mind, and memory whose word
Shall quicken us among the halls of sleep;
Heart of our heart, when Love has overheard
Our grief, and comes to comfort them that weep;
Absolute Form for the immortal soul;—
Thus Hope interprets thy close-written scroll.

But veils hang over thee who art alone
The one, the never-penetrated veil;
The soundless harmonies of yonder zone
Sow doubt with us where Time shall wield the
flail.

—This light is only yours when you are gone;
This life, when you are lying mute and pale.—
Thus hast thou spoken with that unknown speech
Whose inner sense surmise may never reach.

Yea, ocean of the sky that has no end,
Who is like thee on earth? and thou, in turn,
Of the great One whom none may comprehend,
Art but the glass where his reflections burn.
In vain with guesses of thy vast, we spend
Our time-bound thoughts that blazing planets
spurn;

Only the mind compares with thee in scope;
Mind, the Idea; thou, source of light and hope.

Spirit in dust, that claims thee as its kin,
Goes forth to meet thee at the starry hour;
Lays down its burdens, trusts in thee to win
Its long denied desire, for thou art power.
Thou foldest the worn flier deeply in
Thy still abyss; thou givest him the flower
Of contemplation, and the flowing streams
Of life to water his half-withered dreams.

In thy great realm of stars, which star is mine?
Which star entangled in that radiance?
The child once laughed with joy to see it shine,
And felt new vigour in its crystal glance.
The star that Fate once gave to be my sign
Through all the comets wild, unmeasured dance.
The star that means my happiness on earth,
My future house, the watcher at my birth?

O were it thou! my star, whose light burned there
Clear through the heaven's outspread firmament,
Whose metred glory through the upper air
Moved on, while golden thousands came and went!
Above all others, lonely, proud, and fair;—
O were it thou whose healing draught was sent
To quench my thirst and soothe me from afar,
Thou radiant world, thou quiet lonely star!

R. S. II.

THE PEARL

WHY, you ask me, have I gold no longer?
Why do I go wandering frankly poor?
I, whose splendour dazzled like the sunrise
Proudly pouring gold upon the moor?
Thus you question; this, then, is the answer:
Fate spoke her inexorable command,
Sent me forth from my untroubled dwelling,
Drove me out across the troubled land.

Traveling thus, one day when I was weary
Suddenly my eyes beheld a pearl,
Just when I was sickened with earth-pleasures,
Sorrows, and life's unavailing whirl.
Such a vision no man has imagined,—
Never such a living wreath of rays,
Never such a clear, transparent lustre,
Never such a pure, triumphant blaze.

Not my eyes alone were thus enchanted;
In my heart as well there seemed to grope
Through the dark, the light of consolation,
Through desire's regret the beams of hope.
When my eyes beheld that sudden splendour,
Then my spirit tasted joy; there went
Swords of sunlight cleaving through the shadows,
Streams of gold through earth's impoverishment.

Money in my hand, I sought the owner.
"Any sum!" I cried, "that it be mine!"

In the end I paid him all my fortune,
All my mortal riches for divine.
Everything I gave for my desire,
Everything I gave, and from his door
Wandered forth a beggar,—but the radiant
Pearl is with me, priceless as before.

R. S. H.

TWO SONNETS

(From the "Alma Sonnets" series in *Adam Homo*)

I

HERE shall I sit and write you. It is late.
The red sun dives beneath the distant trees;
Bushes and leaves, lulled faintly by the breeze,
Merge in the dusk where night's dark sentries wait.

Sleep softly enters through the garden gate,
Closes the wells of fragrance where the bees
Have hummed all day; but sweet with memories
The pale night violet wakes in hidden state.

Love, when our lives move westward with the sun,
And light is slanting dimly through the brake
From that deep verge where all our days have set,

Then, from our closing dreams, a single one
Shall rise above the sleepers, and awake
With fragrance like the pale night violet.

II

You set me pondering the other day
When you demanded what my thoughts would be
If you should change your mind, and suddenly
Choose some one else as bride, and go away.

If love should flee your heart, and every ray
Faded, Beloved, from the living tree,
With blurred eyes gazing back, then should I see
Lost Eden vanish in eternal grey.

But though all faded that I hoped to win;
Though the swift whistling arrows of my pain
Stabbed me; though I were humbled to the
ground;—

Yet, I should be like some old violin
That broken once, and mended, sings again
With softer tone, but with a weaker sound.

R. S. H.

THE TRUMPET OF DOOM

KNEEL, kneel, O earth, in sackcloth and in ashes.
Throw off your mask of pride. The zenith flashes
With keen-winged hosts cleaving the clouds asunder.

Doom breaks in thunder.

Down, down in dust, all things that earth has
gilded,
All stones of Nature, walls that art has builded.
All spires that pride has raised for Man's seduction,
Marked for destruction.

Down, down in dust, to drain death's bitter chalice,
High heads of fame, small hearts of brooding malice,
Down, Mighty Names, and in the darkness render
Your outworn splendour.

Forth, forth to be revealed before the spacious
Light, O you hidden monsters, and ungracious
Lurkers in caverns of unholy moonlight;
Forth to the noon-light.

Forth, forth, from every heart's most secret portals,
You smouldering dreams, you flaming lusts of
mortals,

And you, O hope, in some old sorrow rooted,
Whose sigh is muted.

Up from the tomb, pale memories, dark traces
Of hidden sins. Rise up, you tear-stained faces
And mouldy skeletons and beauties crumbled,
Whom Death has humbled.

Up from the tomb, you dead of vanished nations,
And you, the quick, and you last generations,
Come forth where all the shadows that have flat-
tered
Your souls are scattered.

Stop in mid-orbit, World, in life's full flower,
And you, O Time, fold up your final hour.
Down from eternity's triumphant halls
The trumpet calls.

R. S. H.

To the Star. Last stanzas of the first song from *The Dancer*
(*Danserinden*) 1832.

The Trumpet of Doom from *Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew*
(*Ahasverus, den evige Jøde*) 1853.

J. P. Jacobsen, 1847-1885

AN ARABESQUE

HAVE you wandered bewildered in darkening forests?

Have you known Pan?

I once was smitten;

not in the sombre forests

while all the Silent whispered.

No, that Pan I have never known,

but I have felt the Pan of passion

when all Voices were hidden.

In sun-flooded regions

grows an unimagined herb;

only in bitterest stillness,

under a thousand flames of the sun,

opens its blossom

for an evanescent moment.

It blazes like a maniac's eye,

like death's red cheeks.

This have I perceived

in my hour of ecstasy.

She was like the subtle snow of the jasmine,

the blood of poppies moved in her veins,

her cold, marmoreal hands

lay in her lap

like nenuphars on a profound tarn.
Her syllables sank
as fall the fragile petals of apple-trees
to the dew-cool grass;
but there were hours
when they writhed coldly and clearly,
the perfect jet of a fountain.
There was a sigh behind her laughter
and triumph behind her tears.
Before her all things bowed themselves,—
two things alone defied her:
her own proud eyes.

From the dangerous lily's
dazzling chalice
she drank to me,
to him who is dead,
and to him now beneath her tread.
To us all she drank
(and then her eyes for once obeyed her)
the faith of irrefragible vows
from the dangerous lily's
dazzling chalice.

All has fallen!
On the snowy plain
between the brown trees
grows a lonely Thorn.
The stray gusts claim its leaves:
one by one,

one by one,
it rains slowly its blood-red berries
upon the white snow,
glowing berries
on the cold snow.—

Have you known Pan!

S. F. D.

VALDEMAR'S COMPLAINT OVER HIS
MURDERED MISTRESS

LORD, do you realize what you did
When you took Tovë from my breast?
Do you know that you snatched away
My one expectancy of rest?
Have you no shame, to sit secure
And take the last lamb of the poor?

Lord, I also am a king,
And I have learned upon my throne
Not to steal from subject-hearts
The last delight they call their own.
Lord, you are wrong! In such a vein
You may crush, but you cannot reign.

Lord, your angels fill your ears
With flattery of your holy Name;
You find no true friend by your side
When you have need of faithful blame.

Ah! no one can avoid misrule.

Lord, let me be, then, your court-fool!

S. F. D.

THE WOOD WHISPERS WITH TOVĖ'S VOICE

THE wood whispers with TovĖ's voice,
The lake gazes with TovĖ's vision,
The stars shimmer with TovĖ's smile,
The cloud is curved in her breast's division.
The senses scour the forest to snare her,
The thoughts in despair vainly battle to gather her,
But TovĖ is there and TovĖ is here,
TovĖ is far, and TovĖ is near.
Are you bound, TovĖ, by the ancient spell,
Here in the lake and the wood to dwell?
The bosom expands, almost to bursting.
TovĖ! TovĖ! Volmer is thirsting!

You laugh far above me,
You mighty Power!
Remember this—and you shall hear it
In the Judgment-hour:
Two loving hearts are one single spirit;
You cannot tear such a pair asunder,
Snatch her to heaven, leave me far under.

I will not be barred!
I will cut through your angel-guard,
And with my wild hunt gallop hard
Into the kingdom of Heaven!

S. F. D.

APPARITION

YOU in my thoughts—
Red is my cheek,
Clenched is my hand,
My lips gently tremble.
A scent of dew and new, unfolding leaves,
And the light shadows of a naked bush,
A dash of orange sunlight on far windows,
A hand which leaps from off my shoulder,
And two lips, which in pain and anguish,
Soundlessly, suddenly, burst from one another—
All flashes past me in a single second.
Then it is night;
And high, against a dusky heaven,
Upheld by spirits, whom my eyes perceive as
A darkened yet a hueless undulation,
There you recline, as poured across the air.
Your dress is very white and never moving.
Your arm is curved across your features.

Only the drawn mouth's pain remains unhidden.
Thus I behold you; and you slowly vanish,
While I and the earth sink together.

S. F. D.

NIGHT PIECE

WHEN day has gathered all its pain
And wept it out in dew,
Night opens heaven's keep again
With the eternal, silent pain.
And one by one
And two by two
The genii of far worlds walk out
From the huge gate of heaven's redoubt.
Slowly they stride from the blue porches,
Holding on high their star-torches
Far above earthly joy and sorrow.
Not slow, nor quicker,
Their steps they trace. . . .
While strangely flicker
In the cold winds of Space
The star-torches' wavering fires.

GENRE PICTURE

ONCE a page gazed far away
From a lofty tower,
Planning a long lover's *lai*
On his passion's power;
Found his thoughts most badly jumbled,
Sat and fumbled
Now with stars and now with roses—
Nothing was a rhyme for "roses"—
Then in despair set his horn to his mouth,
Clutched his sword with emotion;
Blowing thus his passion out
Over the whole ocean.

SCARLET ROSES

YOU must suffer that for many years
Which seemed a passing pleasure;
The smile of an hour is paid with tears
Through years that none can measure.
Harm and dole shall well from the scarlet roses.

Charioted on Fortune's wheel
We dash past tribulation;
Yet already the enslaving load is placed

In wait at our destination.
Harm and dole shall well from the scarlet roses.

The life of Joy is half dazed by dream;
But Grief is beyond seduction.
Its lidless eyes shall gaze on you:
Eyes with a whirlpool's suction.
Harm and dole shall well from the scarlet roses.

The smile must fail; for joy is but
A flash before distant thunder.
And the tear shall remain; for repentance is
The shade of all things gone under.
Harm and dole shall well from the scarlet roses.

S. F. D.

An Arabesque (En Arabesk) was probably written in 1862, but was not published until 1874.

Valdemar's Complaint over His Murdered Mistress (Herre, ved du hvad du gjorde?) is the seventh of the *Gurresange*. For the details of the Valdemar-Tovë legend, see note to Hauch's *Wild Hunt*.

The Wood Whispers with Tovë's Voice. Two selections from *The Wild Hunt (Den Vilde Jagt)*, the eighth of the *Gurresange*. In the days of their happiness, Tovë gave King Valdemar (Volmer) a magical ring to insure his love. After her murder it was thrown into a forest lake; but the ring's power was undiminished, and Valdemar's heart clung to the spot.

Holger Drachmann, 1846-1908

IMPROVISATION ON BOARD

THE time of light-nights will be over soon,
Behind deep waters darkness looms profound;
The waves strike up their more unrestful tune
Which through the summer slept along the Sound.

Soon, guided by the southward-flowing wave,
The birds will stretch their wings toward warmer
zones;

Soon Nature will sit mourning on her grave,
And we shall set our voice to lonelier tones.

But still the summer night spreads out pale flame;
Bent over sea and land, light pinions shine;
And still the god of dawn inscribes his name
With golden fingers on the grey sky-line.

And still the night breeze drives our boat along,
A silent wanderer blown down silent ways,
And still we can give voice to summer song,
We who yet hoard the gold of morning rays.

Pour out libations to the dawn, and blend
With wine for the young god, a hymn to thee.
When strikes our hour, then may we have an end
Like Shelley's on the open Tuscan sea. R. S. II.

I HEAR IN THE MIDNIGHT

I HEAR in the midnight the slumberless
lull of Venetian waters.

From under the arches
solemnly marches

a steady procession of numberless
ripples, mournful and slow.

They are tiny dwarfs from the Mountain where
stands

the Palace of Marble; from far-away lands
they come, row on row.

They are bearing a burden, they are chanting a
song,

pacing somberly nearer, a sorrowing throng
whose voices rise up to me out of the night:

Thou art dead, Snow-white!

I see vaguely the fair apparition
white-clad, of a wax-pale child,

who lures me, who minds me

of something that blinds me

with grief, as beholding that vision

my head burns, my heart aches with frost.

How calm is her brow, how serenely at rest

she lies with her hands child-like on her breast

trustfully crossed.

And there in the curve of her breast is a spray
of the green oleander that blooms for a day,—

ah, why do I hear through the depth of the night:

Thou art dead, Snow-white?

The winds are awaking, they smother
the choir of the somnolent waters.
The darkness grows vaster;
the ripples run faster,
they hurry against one another
and scatter the shapes they have drawn.
The dwarfs have gone back to the far-away lands,
to the Mount where the Palace of Marble stands,
through the gate of the dawn.
I sit on the threshold, bitterly wise;
ah, how did those visions, those voices arise
from an old fairytale through the desolate night:
Thou art dead, Snow-white!

R. S. II.

SAKUNTALA

I COULD not sleep for yearning.
A wind of flowers
awoke my dreams,
pouring warm through my window
in rich Himalayan streams.
I heard the tall palms' music,
and a word
they wept to sing;
I heard it blown on the winds of spring:
Sakuntala, Sakuntala.

August Himalayan mountains
with splendid foreheads

against the sky,
why have your fountains and rivers
found me, the remote passerby?
What memories move on your waters
that my eyes
are hot with pain?
What face leans down from the past again?
Sakuntala, Sakuntala.

O Thou! whose calm eyes lower
like hazy stars
to gaze on me,
as if at this hour the magic
ring were bestowed on thee;—
it is not one hour, one day,
that divides
our souls' blown spheres,
but thousands of years, withered years,
Sakuntala, Sakuntala.

O Child! thou hast lost no ring!
Dushjantas flung it
into the river,
and though he should dam the current,
it will lie unfound forever.
He is hunting beside the river
where the palms
grow on the slope.
Dushjantas has slain an antelope,
Sakuntala, Sakuntala. R. S. H.

THE ROOM SANK IN SILENCE

THE room sank in silence.
The evening was spent.
Where she had been singing
stood the mute instrument,
with hidden tones slumbering
in it at last;
she could awake them,
and now that was past.

In their place stood the candles
guttering low;
on the glasses scarce glimmered
their wavering glow.
You sipped here the vintage
life-warmed with your breath;
I feel but the glass's
Cold, stony death.

O could you return to
me, joyfully then
I would put back the wine
on the table again;
the torches rekindled
illumine our night,
you enthroned as the hostess,
myself at your right.

The rhythm of your singing
would flow through our feast;

I should sit at your feet till
dawn reddened the east.
And then I should carry
you safe to your door,—
if you were not lying
dead, long before.

The room sank in silence.
The evening was spent.
Out of tune and neglected
stood the mute instrument.
Like the pall of a coffin,
the cover shut fast,—
O God, be gracious!
The Past . . . the Past . . .

R. S. H.

BARCAROLLE

He

YOU sit in the boat that goes swimming
deep in the song of the sea;
your wistful eyes overbrimming
with dream as your thoughts run free
toward clouds of the sunset hour
where the heart's desire shines clear;
they reach to you, luringly near,
they beckon, they vanish, they lower.

But the clouds of the twilight-tower
in the violet atmosphere,
that beckon, and beckoning, lower,
or fly though they still seem near,
stand as the symbol of sorrow,
Love's face in a darkening mirror;
they shine with a light ever clearer,
to break into rain on the morrow.

She

Before me there glows
a fine gossamer
where rays of the sunlight tangle and blur.
And now my eyes close.
Ah, you have wound tightly
the gossamer skein,
you, who guessed rightly
the joy and the pain
that contend in my dream of the sunset, and stain
my cheeks with the red of the rose.

I walk as in leaves
of the flickering spring,
an ocean of flowers that billow and fling
their undulant sheaves.
Ah, could I but guide you,
Love, through my dream;
wander beside you

over that stream,
then let the waves drag us beneath them,—at least
our lives were a song and a feast.

I hear you call me,
the bird to his love,
the stag to the hind through the darkening grove.
Ah, what shall befall me?
Where can I seek cover?
One word from the lover
and the loved one is there.
The bird and the stag will follow me where
across worlds I shall hear you call me.

R. S. H.

THERE WELLS UP SOUND

THERE wells up sound—

from deep eternity,
From shadows of the forest's dreadful lair;
Plants, animals, all things that live and breathe,
The smallest dwellers in the upper air,
The stone beneath the surface, numb and dead,
In nameless torment sway, and writhe, and seethe,
Or lie surrendered to a nameless dread.

Ah woe! what figures menacing and dire
Loom up behind the mountain rocks and trees?

Phantoms embracing, breaking loose again,
 Eyes glaring out in panic-stricken fire,
 Hands twisting in a haze of fever glow,
 A mouth which tries to bless and can but curse,
 Strange whorls whose twining arabesques rehearse
 The saga of my youth—

dead long ago.

Am I surrendered to a nameless dread!
 In nameless torment do I writhe and seethe?
 Have I not thought myself quite numb and dead,
 Free as the dwellers in the upper air?
 Has not the loneliness wherein I drowned
 Become the highest bliss wherein I breathe,
 Untouched by ghosts of memoried despair!
 Why then this terror?—

hush! there wells up sound!

R. S. H.

THE DAY WHEN FIRST I SAW YOUR FACE

THE day when first I saw your face
 I only saw your beauty glowing;
 Golden lashes that interlace
 Like grain that gleams in a sunny place
 Where summer breezes are blowing.

The hour when first I saw your face
My heart received you altogether;
Grey eyes and deep, where I could trace
Floods of desire like streams that race
Through woods in tempestuous weather.

But from that hour, our first embrace,
Cradled in love beyond all knowing,
I flung my dreams of you to space,
For your loving-kindness, your gentle grace,
Nor beheld your beauty glowing.

Grey eyes and deep, where I could trace
The spirit's dreams that live forever,
Shadowed by lashes that interlace
Like gleaming grain by streams that race
Toward the deep and compassionate river.

Dear Child, enfold me with your grace
Of dream until your spring has faded;
I love the broken grain, I place
A kiss on the rain-drenched flower-face
That weeping has overshadowed. R. S. H.

VALBORG SONG

HELLO there! take your ragged hat
Old as the hills and tattered,
Toss it up to the ceiling first,
Then down to the floor, well battered.

High to fly,—that's all we know
When Pegasus is saddled,
But the vicious ass soon throws you off,
He's old and his brains are addled.
And to-morrow is Valborg's Day!

Whoa! hold still there, little horse!
You've been standing too long idle.
Once mounted I'll ride to Heaven's Inn
And throw the porter the bridle.
The sun is shining and clear as a gem,
Clouds melt as the day grows older;—
“Well, well,” says the porter, “and whom have
we here
With a fiddle slung from his shoulder!”
And to-morrow is Valborg's Day!

Fiddler I am by bent and by trade,
As for strings, I don't own any,
But I borrowed these and my fine old hat,
For I haven't a single penny.
My fiddle dangles in rose-red bands,
And my hat has a heron feather,
But I pawned to a Jew the clasp that held
The hat and the plume together.
And to-morrow is Valborg's Day!

My sweetheart tied the red ribbons on,
And behind my ear she kissed me;

I can hear her voice wherever I go,
Wherever the bypaths twist me.
A voice that whispers: flit far and wide,
And if you know the way there,
Fly even to Heaven's merry Inn,—
But don't forget me and stay there!
And to-morrow is Valborg's Day!

R. S. H.

VÖLUND THE SMITH

WELDED in chains I am sitting
All day and all night, to mould
With hammer and tools a treasure,
A picture-world out of gold.

And if time shall break in pieces
This thing that in my sight
Was a treasure, then shall I slumber
Through the long, lonely night.

If somebody tramp above me
On my gravestone wet with dew,
And declare: He was not a master!
I shall say: his words are true.

If they say that my art and vision
Were for sale to whoever would buy,

Then shall I leap from my coffin,
And shout: No! that's a lie!

Then proud and flushing with anger
At the shameful lies they dinned
In my ears, I shall sleep to the murmur
Of the steady, eternal wind.

R. S. H.

Viggo Stuckenberg, 1863-1905

CONFESSION

I HAVE a saint's shrine in my home
of tempest-gloom,
of summer light,
of scattered stars in the deep night,
enchased with subtle cunning.
There sleeps, enchained by holy power,
each vanished hour:
my life, in its long running.

When from the transitory round—
the joy profound,
woe past appeal,
the tumult of the terrene wheel—
my spirit hides serenely,
there comes an hour that is divine
from out the shrine,
which stirs my deep heart keenly.

Not pleasure, nor yet grief, awakes.
—It seems there breaks
a host of stars
in luminous and holy bars
across the lofty spaces,
steadily watching me and mine,

remote, divine,
with pure, eternal faces.

And every planet is a smile,
a bitter smile,
a smile of peace,
a sigh, a triumph, a caprice,
a dream, an hour of pining.
Each scorn, each scoff, each hopeful cry,
each heavy sigh:
my life, forever shining!

I know but one thing which is mine:
it is divine:
my life itself,
for good or bad, my life itself;
and I have not the power
(since nothing else exists for me
eternally)
to blot out one past hour.

S. F. D.

EARLY OCTOBER

OUTSIDE it is blowing.
Now the rain is cold,
and the day grows barren
over the ugly mould.

Under garden bushes
bullfrogs wetly stare
while the rose-bed withers
in a calm despair.

My reseda shrivels
like a starving snake,
where it once expanded
by the sunny brake.

All the linden foliage,
as the year grows raw,
turns, reverses, crumples
at the slightest flaw.

Yet a solitary
pansy proudly springs,
blue and deep and dusky,
though the chill wet clings;

as it were night's darkness
blown to flower-form,
on its cheek a lonely
star's gold tear still warm.

S. F. D.

SNOW

PALLID earth, silent snow,
peace, whose breath is gently clinging,
sun-hour joy and sun-hour woe,
air, where now no bird is singing,

deepest peace, which blotted out
finches' jubel, throistles' sorrow,
hushing with command devout
yesterday, to-day, to-morrow;

—lo! you were a god to me,
weaving from your crystal quiet
garments of felicity
vainly sought in the world's riot.

happiness of following
all the million songs of being,
learning at the end to sing
three or four chords well-agreeing,

winter peace of loneliness,
when on the night sky's high glimmer
hours long since turned bodiless
like a crowd of planets shimmer.

S. F. D.

Confession (Bekendelse), one of a series of poems addressed to his friend, Johannes Jørgensen, in February, 1896. Jørgensen had been converted from Atheism to Catholicism, and had published *Confession (Bekendelse)* to which this is an answer (see page 145).

Johannes Jørgensen, b. 1866

AUTUMN DREAM

I DREAMED last night of deserted
Woods in the autumn rain,
And wet, red saplings that skirted
The withered path of pain.

I saw the thick hazes deaden
Groves and the woodland beyond,
And in the red hills the leaden
Glint of a colourless pond.

So far from the world, so lonely
So far from things that exist;
Only the wilderness, only
The fortress of autumn mist.

The dark in a thickening layer,
The long road withered and drear,
The drizzle lowering greyer,
And my heart pounding in fear.

I awoke, but still in the streaming
Light I wandered again
Down the barren path of my dreaming,
With my eyes misted with rain.

It seemed as if life were only
An escapeless path that led
Through eternal rain, and the lonely
Saplings, twisted and dead.

R. S. H.

THE PLANTS STAND SILENT ROUND ME

THE plants stand silent round me,
And the trees with light green leaves
Where slanting sunlight scatters
Its dust in yellow sheaves.

Far bells ring faintly over
The basking summerlands,
Vast and green and breathless
Round me the forest stands.

Only a lonely throstle
Trilling in yonder tree.
In the air a smell of forests,
In my heart, ecstasy.

R. S. H.

CONFESSION

THE half-moon sank behind a sombre tree
And glimmered golden through the leafy lace.
One far, one near, two voices rose to me.

I heard dance music from a distant place,
Music of jaded, love-worn violin,
The body's voice that thought has rendered base.

But near at hand I heard the song begin
Of leaves that murmur like the summer sea
Under that forest where the planets spin.

I paused; I rested there, and sleeplessly
Searched the far moon's last smouldering of light;
Then rode the surf into eternity.

Eternity! why have men shunned your height?
Now lust-sick violins have sunk away.
The feasters' lamps are quenched beneath the
 night.

But your tremendous song like flooding day
Lifts souls and minds and bodies toward the East;
Saviour, Redeemer, raise us from the clay!

As moonlight through the darkness, so the feast
Dispersed seductive summer-throbbing song,
While the mind cringed to feel the flesh released.

But like a sea your music flows along,
And like a vast and silent forest, sings;
O Shrine whence life is poured unstained and
strong!

Round coasts of earth your starry surf still brings
The rarer food that life is nourished by;
O deep abyss where even fear has wings!

Whither, Eternity, whither shall we fly?
Your great heart pulses through the beast, and
through
The leaf your golden plant-dreams seek the sky

With thoughts of purer sun and air and dew,
Also my spirit wandering many lands,
Also my body in the night with you,

Eternity, forever in your hands!

R. S. H.

Ludvig Holstein, b. 1864

AH, LOOK, MY FRIEND

AH, look, my friend, the blossoms on every apple
bough!

White with a tinge of scarlet,—the shining joy
that passes.

Drunken, the bees dive into the flaming flower-
masses;

The air is full of balm; the skies lean near us now.

What fay has built these islands of flowers in the
air?

Here I am sure we wandered in long forgotten
ages!

“Yes,” said my friend, “and later, when time has
turned its pages

Beyond our story, surely again we wander there.

“These island-gardens shining against the placid
blue

Are all that beauty whither the soul would be re-
turning,

And all the white desires across the heavens burn-
ing,

And all the joys we dream of, and fruitlessly
pursue.”

"Yes," I repeated sadly, "we fruitlessly pursue
The spring's profounder raptures that suddenly
arise
From earth and hover near us, yet fly when we
pursue.

"But right above us, flowers glow through the at-
mosphere;
The sky stands round us deep, and blue, and
strangely near." —
I looked and saw tears sparkle in my friend's wist-
ful eyes.

R. S. H.

SUNLIGHT IN THE ROOM

IN my room the light and sprightly
Sunmotes leap and twinkle brightly;
Jacob's ladder climbs the glory
Of the sun king's territory.

Angels mounting, intertwining,
Where the million motes are shining;
Smoke from my cigar entangles
With its spiraled blue their spangles.

Look, the light glows through the ruddy
Red begonia; we could study

In those flowers and in those hairy
Leaves each vein and capillary.

All the picture frames conspire
To enkindle golden fire,
And the lampshade on the narrow
Shelf shoots out a ruby arrow.

Even the chair's green velvet cover,
Half in sun, half darkened over,
Is a forest-bounded meadow
Slowly yielding to the shadow.

You, my tiny wife, sit quiet
In the sunlight's playful riot,
Lulled by dusk, amused by fancies
Of these mutable romances.

R. S. H.

FATHER, THE SWANS FLY AWAY

FATHER, the swans fly away,—but where?
Far! Far! stretching their wings away,
Craning their necks toward the skyline that swings
away
Far, far, none knoweth where.

Father, the clouds sail away,—but where?
Far! Far! hunted by scurrying
Winds out over the bright sea hurrying
Far, far, none knoweth where.

Father, the days dance away,—but where?
Far! Far! whence the lost periods
Roll to the river that swallows their myriads,
Far, far, none knoweth where.

Father, we too shall vanish,—but where?
Far! Far! closing our eyes we go,
Bending our heads with sorrowful sighs we go
Far, far, none knoweth where.

R. S. H.

Helge Rode, b. 1870

MORNING

QUICKLY I open my eyes from sleep,
I am no longer blind;
in a second the light of all the world
pours carolling into my mind.

I look out at the freshened world;
I laugh and sit up in bed
like a healthy child who loves all things
which he has inherited.

Happiness quivers and power swells
through all my exulting blood.
I rejoice like the Lord on the Seventh Day:
my world is also good!

Again, by my creative might,
I have shaped the abundant earth
with gardens and rivers, with flowers and trees,
with music and praise and mirth.

I have painted blue my arching sky,
I have lighted the sparkling sun.
I have fastened wings to my struggling thoughts
and laughed at their dizzying fun.

O jubilant thought! My life, my life!
O marvelous bestowment!
During six days God strove with his world:
Mine I made in one moment. S. F. D.

PURPLE

THE midsummer night is oppressive,
The midsummer night knows no rest:
the dim light dreams as it watches
on the earth's drowsy breast.

What is it? A changing entity?
Am I different, or renewed?
There wakens—what is it that wakens
deep in my pallid mood?

It is purple—mysterious purple,
a tremulous, radiant gloom
which burned and broke to the present
from out my spirit's womb.

It wells up—slowly—then faster—
in desire's secret flood:

I close my eyes, to luxuriate
in skies of purple blood.

O holy Purple! Betray me
your splendid, resounding hour . . .
Transformed!—I feel now, I know now,
O Purple, your terrible power!

S. F. D.

DREAM KISS

I AWOKE in the night from the gentlest sleep,
feeling your slow kiss subtly creep
to my mouth: wherefore my slumber was deep.

I saw, like a dim waterlily, your face
parted from mine by a small space;
nought in the world had such exquisite grace.

And nought by night could so sweetly breathe
or glimmer so white to the blind beneath
as that waterlily's petalled wreath.

I saw that you slept, and in your dream
you were borne on the breast of your love's stream;
no waking soul could be so supreme.

I felt the strange kiss slowly creep
as a delicate sweetness through my sleep,
down to my spirit's inmost deep.

My kiss was yours, and yours was mine;
nought in the world was more divine
than our kiss's ultimate anodyne.

Like the waterlily's petalled round
which reaches up from the hidden ground,
its roots were deep in the rich Profound.

S. F. D.

Jeppe Aakjaer, b. 1866

PRELUDE

I CROUCH among the friendly roots of rye, in shelter here.

I listen, and I listen till my blood is singing clear.
The white rye, the kind rye, that strikes me, as the breeze

Plays with a thousand little fingers on the silver keys.

It sounds like music in a vaulted hall where dancers pass,

And the crystals of the lamps are tinkling with their bells of glass.

The calling song, the bell song, along the summer rye,

The dear familiar Danish sound in which we live and die.

It hymns across the cottage roofs and pastoral expanse,

And round the living hedge the flying flute notes glance,

Behind the brook and bramble bush and marsh its flowing chord

Goes out to meet the song of waves across the windy fjord.

R. S. H.

PAE' SIVENSAK

WITH wobbling paunch and rigid neck and scant,
fat wheeze,
And meerschaum pipe that dangles to his round
knock-knees,
His arm curved round a jersey blouse, his red
wrists bare,
So waddles forth Pae' Sivensak who's dancing
there.

So worthily he polkas with a bent, hunched back,
As though he were cavorting with his big rye-
stack!
The sweat drips to his boot-tops from his lank,
damp hair,
Indeed it is Pae' Sivensak who's dancing there.

Along the wall his family titters—quite ill-bred!
The frightened floor is rocking with his ten-ton
tread,
And he mashes with his pigeon toes the dance
tune's blare
That follows up Pae' Sivensak who's dancing
there.

With wriggling shoulders, swollen eyes, and face
like dough,
And neck in fatty folds and creases row on row,

And jingling watch that sounds as if it cried out
clear:

“O look! this is Pae’ Sivensak who’s dancing
here!”

His brain is dizzy inwardly; his pulse hard
pressed,—

It clatters like the cover of a brass-bound chest.

His eyes are popping like a toad’s when storms
break near:

“God help me, poor Pae’ Sivensak, who’s dancing
here.”

A tailor sat behind the skirts (a full two score)

And pushed his club-foot forward on the smooth
dance-floor,

And every one sprang up and craned with round-
eyed stare:

Good God! it was Pae’ Sivensak who tripped up
there!

R. S. H.

JUTLAND

FROM mist my homeland rises forth
with ridges and pasture-lands;
with its back to the south and its feet to the north,
it made its bed behind sands;

but never to sleep the sleep of the just,
for the land and the sea are at war;
 when the storm wakes,
 and the surf breaks
its knuckles pounding the shore.

The brooks roll sluggishly on through the lea
where the rivulet snares them at length
and sedately spirals away to the sea
before it has gathered its strength.
But how it can glitter a late summer-eve
when the salmon go swimming upstream,
 when dew hangs in beads
 on the beards of the reeds,
and the day creeps away like a dream.

Across the broad meadow the summer wind moves
through a carpet of mossy turf.
There are shiny-horned cattle with amber hooves
in the marshes behind the surf.
The colt grows fat on the upland grass
where the sap pours out in streams;
 when he roams the field
 his pasterns yield
with strength, and his red coat gleams.

The fox suns his wicked head beneath
the dyke, as he gnaws his bone.
A hare bounds over the stubbly heath
and sniffs at the grey field-stone.

The otter, safe from hunter and dog,
plumps into his hidden hole,
 and the herons fly
 to the field nearby
where the viper lurks in the knoll.

A hill looms over the seas of grain,
heather-and blueberry-dark.
Up from the thicket, with swift refrain,
rises a tufted lark.
Far over the wold to the long skyline
the windy billowings sweep
 from the changing sky
 through the ripening rye
that is rocked like a child asleep.

A breath in the heather, a tinkle of rye,
a crackle in stalks of the grain;
the big-bellied clouds troop over the sky
and the blue fades to colour of rain.
Wild bees sweep round the cottagers' eaves
toward their hive in the onion patch.
 Sometimes you hear
 a whinnying mare
from the gateway under the thatch.

Here in the home-field long ago
stood a house with its chimney aslant;
sausages hung from the beam in a row,
all else was but debt and want.

Yet swallows nested above the door,
and the yard was a flowery mass,
 and wormwood dried
 on the walls outside,
and the hen laid her eggs in the grass.

There she sat and spun, my weary mother,
bent over her work, day long,
and shared her breasts with me and my brother,
and sang a sorrowful song.
She is resting now by the leaning wall
which the poppies have overgrown.

 When I can not bear
 my weight of care,
then I go through the gateway alone.

What were life worth with its endless needs
and its gnawing vanity,
if there were no spot with a dale and reeds
where the heart trembles to be!
If we were not drawn across the world,
drawn back, to stand at last
 and hear the song
 of dream along
the brook we loved in the past.

Blessed land where the people toil
in want, by the blown sea foam,
I have never owned a grain of your soil
since, a wanderer, I left my home.

One harvest night from your scraggly thicket
a crooked stick you gave
 as a farewell token,
 and when it is broken
perhaps you will give me a grave.

R. S. H.

Pae' Sivensak. Pae', short for Per, is pronounced Peh.

Sophus Claussen, b. 1865

ABROAD

ABROAD they ask my rank and name,
And in their foreign tongues demand
Whither I journey? whence I came?—
Denmark we call our fatherland.

Sea-enlulled my country lies,
Flattened in islands, tongued in coves,
Beyond white sand where the ocean dies
Begin the grass and luxuriant groves.

The beeches shadow the grassy plain,
For gone is the great oaks' tyranny;
There over the uplands heavy with grain
Thrives a nation happy and free.

The sun-blue sea that washes the isles
Has mellowed the island people too,
Gentle of weeping, gentle of smiles,
And all the women's eyes are blue.

Soft summer waves, that break on the sand,
This is the blue their eyes suggest.
In May the green floods over the land.
Green and blue we know the best.

The freest of nations is our home
Where the misty north winds never cease.
Behind the plough through the steaming loam
The peasants march in the ranks of peace.

R. S. H.

PAN

PAN sat and laughed
As he laughs all day
Except when he chooses
To sit and play.

Pan laughed, for there
Was a quarreling pair
Parting forever
Beyond recall.
He would be kissing,
And she,—not at all.

Pan sat and laughed,
Convulsed at the sight,
Echo repeated
His mocking delight.

Then through the forest
Laughter went dancing,
And wantonly glancing

Sighs on the breeze;
Flying, advancing,
If fauns were in hiding
Under the trees.

It was groaning behind her.
Twigs crackled and broke.
And what was that shadow
Under the oak
Where the dusk was so black!

She fled from the laughter.
Was this the way back?
The path would be swallowed
Soon in the darkness.
What were those footsteps
That followed and followed!

She heard all too clearly
Some one in chase.
On through the forest
She quickened her pace.

How came she here
With night so near?

Now she was lost!

She hurried through
A muddy fen,
Not a path was in sight.

What could she do?
She called to him then,
Though she scorned him before,—

A horrible plight!

She listened. No answer.
The steps pattered nearer.
Dangerous, really!

But then it was he.

She flung herself on him,
Safe there at least!
And chattered and scolded
And called him a dunce
And a heartless old beast,
And then even kissed him
More times than once.

Pan sat and laughed,
For none can defy
The tricks he will try.

He laughed and he captured with kisses
A nymph who was just passing by.

R. S. H.

Johannes V. Jensen, b. 1873

AT MEMPHIS STATION

HALF-AWAKE and half-dozing,
in an inward seawind of danaid dreams,
I stand and gnash my teeth
at Memphis Station, Tennessee.
It is raining.

The night is so barren, extinguished,
and the rain scourges the earth
with a dark, idiotic energy.
Everything is soggy and impassable.

Why are we held up, hour upon hour?
Why should my destiny be stopped here?
Have I fled rain and soul-corrosion
in Denmark, India, and Japan,
to be rain-bound, to rot, in Memphis,
Tennessee, U. S. A.?

And now it dawns. Drearily light oozes
down over this damp jail.
The day uncovers mercilessly
the frigid rails and all the black mud,

the waiting-room with the slot-machine,
orange peels, cigar-and match-stumps.
The day grins through with spewing roof-gutters,
and the infinite palings of rain,
rain, say I, from heaven and to earth.

How deaf the world is, and immovable!
How banal the Creator!
And why do I go on paying dues
at this plebeian sanatorium of an existence!

Stillness. See how the engine,
the enormous machine, stands calmly and seethes:
shrouding itself in smoke, it is patient.
Light your pipe on a fasting heart,
damn God, and swallow your sorrow!

Yet go and stay in Memphis!
Your life, after all, is nothing but
a sickening drift of rain, and your fate
was always to be belated
in some miserable waiting-room or other—
Stay in Memphis, Tennessee!

For within one of these bill-shouting houses,
happiness awaits you, happiness,
if you can only gulp down your impatience—
and here there is sleeping a buxom young girl
with one ear lost in her hair;

she will come to encounter you
some fine day on the street,
like a wave of fragrance,
looking as though she knew you.

Is it not spring?

Does the rain not fall richly?

Is there not the sound of an amorous murmur,
a long, subdued conversation of love
mouth to mouth

between the rain and the earth?

The day began so sadly,

but now, see the rainfall brighten!

Do you not allow the day its right of battle?

So now it is light. And there is a smell of mould
from between the rusted underpinning of the plat-
form

mingled with the rain-dust's rank breath—

a suggestion of spring—

is that no consolation?

And now see, see how the Mississippi

in its bed of flooded forest

wakes against the day!

See how the titanic river revels in its twisting!

How royally it dashes through its bends, and
swings the rafts

of trees and torn planks in its whirls!

See how it twirls a huge stern-wheeler

in its deluge-arms
like a dancer, master of the floor!
See the sunken headland—oh, what immense,
 primeval peace
over the landscape of drowned forests!
Do you not see how the current's dawn-waters
clothe themselves mile-broad in the day's cheap
 light,
and wander healthily under the teeming clouds!

Pull yourself together, irreconcilable man!
Will you never forget that you have been prom-
 ised Eternity?
Will you grudge the earth its due, your poor grati-
 tude?
What would you do, with your heart of love?

Pull yourself together, and stay in Memphis;
announce yourself in the market as a citizen;
go in and insure yourself among the others;
pay your premium of vulgarity,
so that they can know they are safe, as regards
 you,
and you will not be fired out of the club.
Court the damosel with roses and gold rings.
and begin your saw-mill, like other people.
Yank on your rubbers regularly . . .
Look about you, smoke your sapient pipe
in sphinx-deserted Memphis . . .

Ah! there comes that miserable freight-train
which has kept us waiting six hours.
It rolls in slowly—with smashed sides;
it pipes weakly; the cars limp on three wheels;
and the broken roof drips with clay and slime.
But in the tender, among the coals,
lie four still forms
covered with bloody coats.

Then our huge express-locomotive snorts;
advances a little; stops, sighing deeply;
and stands crouched for the leap. The track is
clear.

And we travel onward
through the flooded forest
under the rain's gaping sluices.

S. F. D.

THE RED TREE

THE tropical night's humming kettle
boils over against the morning . . .
Rain, rain from the zenith!

The sun rises up in a cloud-burst,
and out of the rain-drenched dawn

darts a sudden lightning-flash
from a horrible luminous force—
long drops, straight stalks of water
stand still in the air like glass rods.

But high behind the sunny rain-trellis,
a flowering tree expands
its red, gigantic crest—
as fiery red a vision
in the lightning flare and in the dawn
as a hot eruption of blood
from the heart of the earth.

And after the frightful thunder
which seconded the lightning,
all things become deep and still
while the day lengthens
and the water brawls.

Now autumn and spring meet together
with the lightning bolt and the blinding rain
in Singapore's red-flowering gardens.

The tree stands, gleaming with green,
fiery with flowers,
and the rain that caresses its crest
as with warm, watery hands
brushes away the faint flowers and leaves
in autumnal whorls

to the tree's root,
while bright, shining buds and shoots
everywhere open their eyes
in the crest, which smokes with the damp.

Now the tree lifts itself, glowing
above its own fall of leaves,
an imperishable pyre
from which there snowed white ashes,
with a thousand new spires of flames.

Ho!

Through the drunken tumult of the Deluge of rain
and the red tree's powerful rustling,
I hear, like a chronicle of ages,
the whinnings of horses, the swarming of trum-
pets,
gallop, drums that are magical, and a sound above
the arrows!
New horn-blasts! Armies laugh!
Thalatta! The sun over Austerlitz!

The whole world presses forward victorious, and
dies.

And why do I sit alone, with a rough croak
from my melancholy and marsh-like heart?
Who has cheated me of my lightning destiny?

S. F. D.

THE WANDERING GIRL

WHO are you then, wild girl,
Wandering by on the highway,
Pushing your way in the wind
In the red westerly sunshine?

It is late; are you trying to keep
A tryst with the swift-winged tempest?
He is a flyer! you find
Him never until he has fallen.

The amorous wind presses
Your thin dress to your knees.
The wind lingeringly outlines
Your young wandering waist.

Why do you breast the tempest?
Why bend against the wind?
It will lift you; strive no longer . . .
The storm! yea, that is I!

R. S. H.

THE BLIND GIRL

Do you say the path is brightened
With flowers where we are going?
Alas, my feet are frightened,
Beloved; my tears are flowing.

Darkness is gracious.

Blind Meretë was speaking.
She walked with her Love, and then
Heard a sigh, went seeking,
And never found him again.

Darkness is gracious.

Have you left me? Come back, I need you!
The hush crowds with alarms.
Look! and my love shall lead you
Back to my groping arms.

Darkness is gracious.

Are you hiding to make me worry?
Do you smile at my frightened face?
Forgive me, the hours hurry,
I want your warm embrace.

Darkness is gracious.

Silent! alas, I shiver
Under the dewy spray
From the night's chilly river;—
Your mouth is far away.

Darkness is gracious.

Now listen! I am afraid.
I am wandering here alone,
Lost in a lurking shade
Of people silent as stone.

Darkness is gracious.

Do black coffins hover?
My pulses freeze and fall.
The dew and my tears brim over,
Tremble and weep and call.

Darkness is gracious.

If you hear my lamentation
And leave me to suffer still,—
God smite you to damnation!
Do you know the blind kill?

Darkness is gracious.

May the lightning strike you black!
Ah, no,—God bless you again!
For my sight is coming back,
And I see that light is pain.

Darkness is gracious.

Poor Meretë, poor lonely
Embrace and sobbing breath!
You searched and searched, and only
Found the warm arms of death.

Darkness is gracious.

R. S. H.

MOTHER'S SONG

THERE flowers in my straining breast
the tenderest of springs.

My own, my tiny, unborn babe
under my heart clings.

I flush when childhood's hidden fire
swells my blood to a tide;
my heart rings when your small foot moves
to show you are satisfied.

While in our slumber you grow, I weep,
I sigh, and I laugh from mirth.
We dream together a twilight dream
of the green and gracious earth.

We dream of the endlessly billowing sea
and of heaven's tremendous sphere
and of broad plains of flowering grass,
where rest the delicate deer.

We dream of the zebra, the leopard, the gnu;
and of the dying light
when the agile monkeys cuddle and cough
in fear of the forest night.

We dream of towers by the Yang-tse-kiang,
of Himalayan snowy cold,
and of the tremendously strong sun
whom no one dares behold.

I feel with fear and double joy
in the still night's fantasy
how all things are closer to my heart,
how all have deserted me.

But ah! in you will live again
what dies with me so soon:
the shy light of the youthful stars,
the wise dawn of the moon.

Losing myself in your smile, I die,
a thing of forgotten worth.
I free you, I weep myself away
to the black and blessed earth.

I give you my life; will you lay me at last
in rest beneath the fern?
You are the one to have everything
and give nothing in return.

S. F. D.

COLUMBUS

FULL many a ship on the striding waves
faltered and rolled;
full many a man at the creaking helm
grew grey and old.

Columbus himself was bewildered; he followed
his restless heart and his wandering desire
the way of the waves and the seawind,
under the wan moonfire.

From the days of boyhood his home had been
the uncharted course,
on the blue steed with the white mane,—
Whoa! my horse!

And now he was grey and urged by desire
that grew like the ocean tremendous and tragic,
the desire for something eternal
and the open seas' lost magic.

Grey-headed, the blowing brine in his hair,
and mute with unrest,
he turns the prow of his caravel
to the shining west.

For he lost his youth in the eastern country,
and now in the sunset he would discover
the land where the sunlight lingers
after the day is over.

The ship is alone on the breathing sea,
as the moon in the sky;
the disheartened sailors keep watch for land,
for they fear to die.
Their ship will come to the edge of the ocean,
the terrible sluice with the sea downpouring,

and the storm comes up, and they tremble
to hear the dark void roaring.

They threaten the silent skipper, they cry:
Madman, turn back!

The abyss will swallow our tiny ship
in the howling black!

—Give me three days more, and if there is nothing
after three days of sailing-weather,

I will drown, I will die, I will vanish,
I and my dreams together.

The third day wanes on the barren sea,
mile after mile.

In the fire of the afterglow there shines
a palm-green isle.

There is your promised land, O Columbus!
But while they hail him, the great redeemer,
And weep for exceeding gladness,
he is silent, Columbus, the dreamer.

For when he discovers the saving isle,
his visions flee.

A new world is wedged between his soul
and the ultimate sea.

And turning back, embracing the ocean,
he bears in his heart, forever burning,
the burden of the wandering billows,
the load of eternal yearning.

Columbus, your withered age, and your hair
whitened with frost,
crown a Viking brow and a broken soul;—
your dreams are lost.

You gave us a world, and now you are sailing
the hissing foam where the worlds are swallowed,
and your mighty shadow covers
the fugitive light you followed.

For he can not die whose desire and woe
never will die.

The seawaves wander sighing and grey,
grey as the sky.

There he stands in chains, the adventurous skipper,
His phantom ship with her dead goes flying
under the wan moonfire,
where the seawaves wander sighing.

Full many a sailor lost himself
and left no trace,
where the seawaves wander sighing and grey
through desolate space.

For there is no god on the perilous ocean
but the heart of Columbus, forever burning,
who created a world from his sorrow,
and from his eternal yearning.

R. S. H.

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